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AMBASAID NA HEIREANN, LONDAIN



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21 October 1994

Mr. Seán O hUiginn,
Assistant Secretary,
Anglo-Irish Division,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
St. Stephen's Green,
DUBLIN 2.

PST
PSS
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Mr F Murray
Dr P Munnigh
Joint Sec
Box

Dear Seán,

I attach for your information a biographical note prepared by Ms. Nolan on Dr. Marjorie (Mo) Mowlam, Labour's new Spokesman on Northern Ireland.

I have met Mo on a number of occasions and found her to be very bright and charming as well as direct, sometimes to the point of bluntness. She could also be described as iconoclastic, with strong anti-establishment views, as is evidenced by her recent controversial remarks about the Royal Family. For this reason she is a media favourite and is also popular among her colleagues in the Commons where she has no difficulty in dealing robustly and socialising in that traditional male environment. Her strong views on women's rights are also well known.

In addition, I have had the benefit of a conversation with Kevin McNamara this morning and his views on Mo Mowlam are, I believe, worth noting. It is necessary, of course, to allow for the fact that they come from an obviously disappointed man within hours of his losing the spokespersonship to the person he took on as a junior member of his team in 1988.

Kevin felt that Mowlam would be "very much her master's voice" and allow events to happen rather than influence them. Her overriding ambition would be to achieve full cabinet minister status in the next Labour government.

He mentioned that Mowlam had been involved to some extent with the controversial Brendan O'Leary Joint Authority Paper.

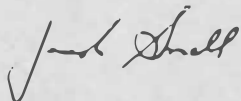
Kevin added that in making this appointment, the Labour leadership appeared to be taking for granted the vote of the Irish community in Britain on the grounds that this vote had nowhere else to go. As you know, Kevin does not share that

view, believing that disaffected voters could easily decide to stay at home on election day and he himself had of course worked extremely hard and assiduously to court the Irish vote here.

I am also forwarding a copy of an interesting report by Joe Hayes on a discussion he had with Mo Mowlam in 1990 which I feel is worth re-reading and which seems to have stood the test of time.

I have already made contact with Mo Mowlam's office with the intention of having her to lunch at the Embassy in the very near future, hopefully before next Thursday's important debate on Northern Ireland in the House of Commons.

Yours sincerely,



Joseph Small
Ambassador

Dr Marjorie [Mo] Mowlam MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Biographical Profile

Marjorie or Mo, as she prefers to be known, Mowlam was born in Southall, Middlesex in 1949. She attended the local comprehensive and went on to read Social Anthropology at Durham University and later Iowa, USA, where she received her doctorate, the subject of which was Consensual Politics and the Swiss Federation.

She joined the Labour Party at university in 1967 and worked as a university lecturer and college administrator before being elected to parliament for Redcar in June 1987. She currently has a comfortable majority of 11,577.

Described from the outset as disarmingly open, gutsy, ambitious and one of Labour's brightest new MP's, Mo Mowlam was appointed Assistant Spokesman on Northern Ireland in 1988, one of the first of the 1987 intake to make it onto the front bench, albeit as a number three.

Serving under Kevin McNamara, with whom she developed a warm working relationship, she urged an inquiry into the Gibraltar shootings, spoke out against the PTA, backed the Guildford Four Appeal, opposed Labour organising in Northern Ireland in a speech to a fringe meeting at the 1989 Conference and succeeded in building up good contacts with both the UUP and DUP. There was a suggestion that relations with the unionists was her special responsibility and she is understood to have had a particularly good relationship with both Ken Maginnis and Peter Robinson.

Though she left the Northern Ireland post for the job of Shadow Spokesman on Trade and Industry in 1989, she continued to have a strong interest in Irish issues and maintained her connection with the Embassy. She was replaced in McNamara's team by Roger Stott.

Mowlam's Trade and Industry portfolio involved special responsibility for the City which she managed with considerable skill. At one time she expressed an interest in visiting the Dublin Stock Exchange. The Embassy provided some assistance but in the event she did not proceed with the visit.

Elected to the Shadow Cabinet in 1992, she moved from the City portfolio on promotion to take over as Shadow Spokesman on the Citizen's Charter where she was also highly effective.

In the run up to the 1993 Labour Party Conference speculation grew that John Smith might move Kevin McNamara and Mo Mowlam was tipped to replace him. At the time she denied all knowledge of such a move, refused a dubious offer of support from the Democracy Now wing and came out publicly in support of McNamara.

She has served as Spokesman on National Heritage from 1993, when she was the top woman elected to the Shadow cabinet.

She was a leading member of Tony Blair's campaign team in the recent Leadership election and is known to have expected a significant portfolio as a result of Blair's reshuffle but recently attracted some unfavourable comment in the media and

from Tory backbenchers when she wrote an article in The Mail suggesting that the Royal family should move from Buckingham Palace to a new people's palace which would act as a showcase for British design.

Mo Mowlam succeeded Kevin McNamara as Northern Ireland Spokesman on 20 October 1994.

For recreation, she enjoys swimming, walking, travelling, watching football and occasionally playing football, in parliamentary challenges.



IRISH EMBASSY LONDON

17 Grosvenor Place,
London SW1X 7HR.

6 March, 1990.

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Dublin.

Meeting with Dr. Marjorie Mowlam MP
Junior Shadow spokesperson on Trade and Industry

Dear Assistant Secretary,

I met Mo Mowlam for a drink on 25 February. Labour MP for Redcar, she took this hitherto safe Tory seat against the odds at the last election. She served for a year as one of McNamara's two juniors on the Northern Ireland team but was promoted by Kinnock to Trade and Industry some months ago in a direct swap with Roger Stott. Few doubt that if Mo Mowlam can hold her seat she will go far in the party and will almost certainly figure in any future Labour Government. She is attractive, articulate and hugely ambitious and is popular with all wings of the party. She is also a close and trusted confidante of Kinnocks.

The Inter-Parliamentary Body

Our conversation was foreshadowed by Stuart Bell's vehement protests at our involvement in the press arrangements for the inaugural meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Body. We had sought to correct certain unfortunate references in the draft press releases prepared by the PR company employed by the IPU and had also suggested that texts be subject to joint agreement by both Co-Chairmen. Temple-Morris welcomed our involvement but Bell - who had drafted the texts with the staff of the PR company - chose to misinterpret our interest.

Mo Mowlam provided welcome reassurance. Describing Bell as "the Michael Mates of the Labour party", she said that we were in the best of company in finding ourselves on his wrong side. Kinnock, she said, found him a most difficult colleague and if he were to continue to cause difficulty on the Body would have no hesitation, as she put it, "in shooting him out of the water". As it transpired, Temple-Morris was equally tough responding to Bell's threats to resign from the Steering Committee by inviting him to nominate his successor. Bell withdrew his resignation and in the course of the inaugural meeting he was perfectly pleasant and agreeable in all our contacts.

The Northern Ireland Labour team

Mo Mowlam wanted it known that she had not asked to leave McNamara's team. Those who suggested that she had sought a move because she had come to realise that the way to the top did not lie through identification with Northern Ireland simply did not know her. Neil Kinnock had asked her to move in response to a request from Gordon Brown. The party had to get it right in the vital Trade and Industry portfolio. Kinnock had however promised her that after the election she could return to the Northern Ireland team and she had every intention, she claimed, of holding him to this.

In assessing who would be Northern Ireland Secretary of State in the event of a Labour Government it was essential, she said, to take account of Kinnock's long standing friendship with McNamara. They had come into the House together and had remained friends ever since. McNamara was deeply loyal to Kinnock. These bonds counted. Her own best guess was that when the chips were down Kinnock would give the job to McNamara "for a year at least" and then hand it to someone more fitted to get things done.

Labour representation in Northern Ireland

She dismissed any idea of Labour organising in Northern Ireland. She was aware of the activities of her party colleague Kate Hoey but felt she had little chance of making a breakthrough on something which was so fundamentally at odds with party policy and "even more to the point opposed by Kinnock". She saw no perceptible change in policy in the foreseeable future despite the activities of Kate Hoey. She felt that the supporters of the campaign were so badly organised and so out of tune with mainline party thinking that they would never get any further than "making a minor nuisance of themselves at party conferences". She agreed that Hoey's involvement lent the campaign a degree of political credibility but she insisted that Kate Hoey had overvalued the impression she had made on the Trade Unions.

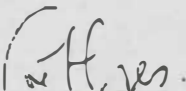
The Unionists

She has tried to keep up her contacts with the second tier Unionists. (During her period on McNamara's team, Mo Mowlam developed a good working relationship with Peter Robinson in particular which her successor, Roger Stott, is seeking to maintain with reputedly much less success).

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She told me she had sat beside Robinson on a flight from Brussels to London very recently. Her innate sense of scepticism at the prospects for any real developments from the current round of talks was, she said, strengthened by her chat with Robinson. Her view is that the Unionist leadership, Molyneaux in particular, has no intention of conceding anything but is playing a skilful game with the Secretary of State and the NIO who Mo Mowlam remarked "should know better and call his bluff".

Yours sincerely,


Joe Hayes
Counsellor