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**Reference Code:** 2021/96/10

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14



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URGENT (FRIDAY MORNING)

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**22 SEPTEMBER 1994**

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON

FOR ASST SEC O HUIGINN FROM MICHAEL COLLINS

VISIT OF UNIONIST DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON

*Mr Herbert*  
*Post*  
*135/2*  
*PST*  
*PSS*  
*Mr F. M. ...*  
*Dr M. ...*  
*John ...*  
*Mr T. ...*  
*Ang Small*

As you are aware, the Unionist delegation comprising Messrs Ross, Maginnis, Trimble and Donaldson arrived in Washington last evening and had a series of appointments today with the Administration and on the Hill. Full details of their programme were sent to you earlier.

Meeting with Vice-President Gore/National Security Adviser Lake

The Unionists met this afternoon with National Security Adviser Tony Lake for about 30 minutes. In the course of this meeting, Vice President Gore dropped in and stayed for about 15 minutes. The White House told me afterwards that the Unionists had a "good session" with the US side. According to the White House, in an effort to ease the atmosphere, there was also quite some discussion about "cows and farming".

A copy of the White House statement which issued this evening is attached. According to the statement Gore/Lake expressed "their support for the strong commitment of UUP leader James Molyneaux and his party for the goal of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland within the framework of the British/Irish Joint Declaration of December 1993". The United States "underscored our conviction that any lasting settlement in Northern Ireland must take into full account the legitimate aspirations and democratic rights of both communities". The statement reiterated "the willingness of the United States to assist in the efforts to achieve peace and reconciliation and reiterated their invitation to Mr Molyneaux to visit the United States in the near future".

135/3

According to an NSC official who attended the meeting the Unionists' primary message, which was delivered in a low-key way, was for the United States to be even-handed in its approach to the Northern Ireland issue. They expressed concern about Adams' forthcoming visit.

In discussion about the IFI the Unionists suggested that the performance of the Fund had improved although it was not perfect. They said that they were not really interested in US hand-outs. What they were primarily concerned about was US investment. They liked the idea of an Investment Conference, which as you know has already been mooted here. National Security Adviser Lake suggested that the SDLP and the UUP could work together on economic issues. The Unionists said that they were "very committed" to future talks although there appears to have been no discussion as to when these might be.

Lake reiterated the invitation to Molyneaux to come to Washington. The Unionists suggested that this might be possible before the end of the year.

While the Unionist delegation appeared to welcome the cease-fire (in earlier meetings they were dismissive) they said that a sign of Adams' good faith would be to enter into some kind of dialogue regarding actual disarmament.

Nancy Soderberg of the NSC sat in on the meeting and afterwards chatted to the Unionists for a bit in an effort to establish a closer relationship.

Congressional Meetings

The Unionists also met on the Hill today with Senator Kennedy, with the House Foreign Affairs Committee and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Nothing dramatic appeared to have arisen.

At the meeting of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (which was attended only by Congressman Gilman and Congressman McCloskey) Gilman put a lot of pressure on the Unionists to "throw some caution to the wind" and get to the negotiating table. The Unionists made a big play of IRA arms caches and said that they thought that the cease-fire was a "political ploy". They also asked that Adams should not be lionised during his forthcoming visit. Again, as they did at the White House, they said they would welcome US assistance on the economic front, particularly the proposed US Investment Conference. They raised with Congressman Gilman the possibility of a five million dollar debt outstanding to OPIC by the Mackie Company in Belfast being waived.

3

135/4

Unlike on the last occasion when they were here when Articles II and III were a primary focus of their energies, on this occasion the matter wasn't even discussed. The Unionists appeared to offer the view that they did not think that the Loyalist cease-fire was far off.

In a meeting with Senator Kennedy the Unionists complained about Sinn Fein's vagueness about a commitment to a referendum. They hinted that a meeting with the Irish Government was only a matter of time away. Again, Maginnis insisted to Kennedy that a Loyalist cease-fire was not far off.

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TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES: (4)