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Reference Code: 2021/96/11

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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For Immediate Release October 3, 1994

NORTHERN IRELAND: CONTACTS WITH SINN FEIN PARTY LEADERS

On August 31, President Clinton welcomed the IRA announcement of its decision to join the political process and to end its campaign of violence. He pledged that the United States would continue to assist in advancing the cause of peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, in full support of the process initiated by British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds in their Downing Street Declaration of December 1993.

In view of the role of Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams in bringing about the IRA's ceasefire announcement of August 31, the Administration authorized a waiver of his ineligibility for a U.S. visa in order to permit him to visit the United States and to explain his views on the peace process in Northern Ireland.

In light of that historic announcement and the peace it has brought over the last month, the United States is today lifting its longstanding ban on contacts between U.S. officials and members of the Sinn Fein party so that a dialogue may begin. In a brief conversation this morning, the Vice President informed Mr. Adams of this action. We expect that this dialogue will take place primarily through our Embassy in Dublin and our Consulate General in Belfast, and that it will help advance the search for a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland. This dialogue will be consistent with the United States' practice of maintaining contacts with political parties throughout the world that seek to advance their political objectives by peaceful means.

As a first step in this dialogue, a meeting with Mr. Adams to discuss the peace process will take place at the Department of State, Tuesday, October 4 hosted by Ambassador John Kornblum, the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs. Ambassador Kornblum will be joined by Leon Fuerth, Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs, Nancy Soderberg, Staff Director of the National Security Council, and other State Department and NSC officials. Attached is a letter from National Security Advisor Anthony Lake inviting Mr. Adams to this meeting.

THE WHITE HOUSE-
WASHINGTON

October 2, 1994

Dear Mr. Adams:

Thank you for your letter of October 1 to President Clinton requesting a meeting with the US Administration to discuss the peace process.

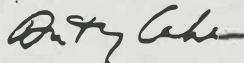
As you know, long-standing US policy has been to prohibit contacts between US officials and Sinn Fein officials. Since the announcement by the IRA of the ceasefire last August, however, that policy has been under review. I am pleased to inform you that in light of that historic announcement and the peace brought about by the IRA over the last month, the President has decided to lift the ban on contacts with Sinn Fein officials so that a dialogue with US officials can begin.

We invite you to begin the dialogue early this week while you are in Washington. Consistent with customary practice, the dialogue would begin at a meeting with US officials at the Department of State. Several White House officials would also participate. This meeting would be the beginning of a process of engagement with Sinn Fein that would increase as events progressed in Northern Ireland toward peace.

It is our hope that we can assist in assuring the IRA ceasefire remains for good and irreversible and that we can assist in bringing others who continue to use and support violence to cease to do so. During the meeting, we would expect to discuss ways to assist Sinn Fein in solidifying support for the political process, how best to assist in promoting talks under the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation proposed by Prime Minister Reynolds as well as the round-table talks convened by the Irish and British governments aimed at reaching a lasting and just agreement with all involved parties. We would also expect to discuss a normalization of relations with Sinn Fein party officials as progress is made and to solicit your views on tangible ways the United States can help promote trade, investment and economic prosperity in Northern Ireland.

Your role in bringing about the IRA ceasefire was a courageous step forward for peace which will benefit all the people of Northern Ireland. I look forward to your entering a dialogue with the United States to advance the goal of a lasting peace.

Sincerely,



Anthony Lake