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Tánaiste,

c c De hounsegh (74)
Hi Mc Learty (in return)
At halm Jhr 14
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1. As you know, Gerry Adams is being invited to a seminar in New York at the end of the month by Mr. Bill Flynn. Leaders of the political parties in Northern Ireland have also been invited to attend. Their response is still uncertain.
2. The immediate issue for us is the question of a visa for Gerry Adams (which may well be the "subtext" to the entire seminar). He is expected to apply for one later this week. After the controversy caused by the Dinkins letter, the issue will be carefully considered by the US Administration this time. Ms. Soderberg of the NSC has asked Michael Collins for our views, and also about the possibility of an approach to Adams and Sinn Fein by the US Administration (paragraph 7 of the note attached).
3. A formal position in favour of a visa may well invite Opposition criticism that the Government are going too far towards Sinn Fein. Failure to advocate one will invite criticism from Irish-American groups. The British are of course strongly opposed and Ambassador Blatherwick raised the issue with Mr. Murray today.
4. There is an implication in Ms. Soderberg's remarks that a visa waiver would be difficult for the Americans, and probably unlikely to be granted, even if we strongly advocate it. That outcome would leave the Government both open to criticism by the Opposition here and also diminished somewhat by a rebuff. It is a matter for political decision how much credit we would wish to use up with the Administration on the issue.
5. A possible compromise would be to indicate that we would support a visa for the purpose of allowing Adams to participate in this seminar, provided he meets the US legal and administrative criteria, and that we consider it is for

Mr. Adams himself to show that he does so and for the US Administration itself to determine whether their requirements are met in any given circumstances.

6. If the US wished to make contact with Adams for clarification of the Sinn Fein position, either in relation to the visa or in general, we might suggest this be done in a low-key way, so as to avoid any propaganda "circus" for Sinn Fein or giving the impression to them that Adams was being given unwarranted status by the US Administration.
7. In view of the Taoiseach's interest in the matter, it would be necessary to consult him before going back to Ms. Soderberg.

Sick

Sean O hUiginn
13 January, 1994.

cc ISS
Mr Murray

Enc. 2