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SECURE FAX

IMMEDIATE

For HQ From Washington  
For A/Sec O Huiginn From Ambassador

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Re: Adams Visa

As discussed, we were informed this evening by the State Department that, following their consideration of the visa issue, it had now been decided to call in Adams "to have a better understanding of his position on achieving peace in NI". Specifically he will be asked if he will make a public statement renouncing violence and work to end the conflict on the basis of the Joint Declaration.

I understand that the intention is to see Adams in Dublin with the Consul General at the Embassy conducting the interview.

The final decision on issuing a visa will depend on how Adams responds. However, room for manoeuvre is limited; according to Nancy Soderberg of the NSC, unless he goes "pretty far" on the formula, it was highly unlikely that a visa will be granted.

Soderberg has also told us that it was necessary to "move mountains" to get the Administration to agree to talking to Adams. In doing so, they were breaking a twenty year self-imposed ban on contact. She insisted that what they were proposing was not the "British line". There was "blood on the floor" within the Administration, with some very strong opposition to the talking formula. This opposition was not just from the State Department.

Soderberg suggested that it was "really important" that Adams should know that the US was not "setting him up". He should not underestimate the strong resistance to him, given that the IRA was still "blowing up buildings". There was a genuine domestic sensitivity here about terrorism (in the context, for example, of the bomb at the World Trade Centre). Seen in this context, a context which they hoped Adams would appreciate, the decision to

talk to him was a substantial one and reflected a genuine desire to "reach out". It would be presented as such in the media. Anything that could be done to convince Adams of this would be welcome.

Senator Kennedy's Office are concerned that the formula almost guarantees that Adams will not get a visa. They said that they heard that some Adams visa supporters here were of the view that Adams should not show up for a meeting with the Embassy on this basis. Kennedy's office have counselled strongly, however, that turning up at the Embassy was the wiser course for Adams to adopt.

As regards media queries, the White House have been saying that the two Governments were "consulted" about the decision. In responding to requests for clarification by the local Irish media on this, we have been directing their focus to the US decision to call in Adams, while placing the issue within the overall context of our public position that the issuing of a visa is a matter between the US Administration and Adams.

I should add that, in informal discussion with the NSC, we have made the point that any private reassurance and views conveyed by Adams should be factored in to their assessment of any public response he may decide to make. The NSC agreed that this was an important point.