



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Meeting of Morrison Delegation with the Taoiseach and  
the Tánaiste. 24 July 1995

1. Background Note from Embassy, Washington.
2. Report by Ambassador, Washington, 17 July 1995.
3. New York Times advertisement by "Americans for Peace in Ireland", 21 July 1995.
4. Letter to President Clinton from Mr. Morrison, 22 June, 1995.

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Americans for a New Irish Agenda

1. Americans for a New Irish Agenda (ANIA) had its origins in a 1992 political support group called Irish Americans for Clinton-Gore. Irish Americans for Clinton-Gore brought together a number of Irish American activists who saw in the Democratic candidate the prospect of greater engagement by the United States on Northern Ireland. The group met several times with then candidate Bill Clinton and advocated support for a number of initiatives by the incoming Administration, in particular a more active role on Northern Ireland. In November 1992, immediately before the election, Clinton wrote to the group in the course of which he repeated a number of promises made during the campaign. These included issuing a US visa to Gerry Adams and the appointment of a special envoy for Northern Ireland. Those primarily associated with the group at that stage included Niall O'Dowd, publisher of Irish American magazine and the Irish Voice; Bruce Morrison, former Congressman and immigration lawyer; and then Boston Mayor, Ray Flynn.
2. After the election, the group renamed itself "Americans for a New Irish Agenda" with a commitment to get the US to play "an active and constructive role in helping secure a just, lasting and peaceful resolution of the troubles in Northern Ireland". It was never a formal body in any sense but primarily through Morrison and O'Dowd maintained contact with the White House in an effort to secure delivery by the President on his pre-election promises. At this stage also, the prominent New York businessman, Mr Bill Flynn, became associated with the group, as did Mr Chuck Feeney, both of whom were members of the Taoiseach's Economic Advisory Board in the United States.
3. Apart from maintaining pressure on the new Administration, the group visited Ireland on several occasions and established and maintained contact with Sinn Fein. The informal IRA 36-hour ceasefire in May 1993 was generally seen as having taken place in anticipation of a meeting between the group and Adams. The Irish-American group

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arranged a second visit to Ireland later that year and again secured a promise of an unannounced week-long ceasefire from the IRA starting September 6. On their several visits to Ireland, the group has also met with the President, the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste and leaders of all the political parties in Northern Ireland except the DUP. This time last year, the group visited Ireland again in the immediate run-up to the IRA ceasefire and sees itself, and is acknowledged in Irish-American circles, as having been closely associated with achieving this outcome.

4. Americans for a New Irish Agenda have again pledged their support for President Clinton in 1996. Recently, Bruce Morrison asked the President to personally intervene to help break the deepening stalemate over the decommissioning of arms and to urge the British Government to rapidly convene all-party talks to include the arms issue, prisoner releases, reform of the police and "repeal of repressive legislation". Morrison applauded the President's role in fostering this process as "one of the great success stories of your Administration's foreign policy". He suggested to the President that without his "personal intervention and sustained interest in finding a solution to the conflict, we would have not come as close as we have to a just and lasting peace in Ireland". Despite periodic concerns expressed by the group that the Administration should be even more active than it has been, the group has every reason to continue this full support for President Clinton and Vice President Gore. Indeed, in several prominent full-page advertisements taken out in the New York Times either by the group or by those closely associated with it, the role played by the President in promoting peace in Northern Ireland has been warmly applauded. (See most recent ad today in the New York Times).
5. Those primarily associated with the group and who are part of the travelling delegation on this occasion include:

**Niall O'Dowd:** Prominent Irish-born publisher of Irish America magazine and the Irish Voice newspaper. Generally seen as having played an important role as an intermediary between Sinn Fein and the White House. O'Dowd has been associated with a number of other important Irish-American initiatives including the Irish America Business 100, Irish America Top 100, etc.. He is also seen as having engaged the interest of businessman Bill Flynn in the peace process.

**Bill Flynn:** A prominent New York insurance executive and the Chairman of Mutual of America. Flynn in his role as Chairman of the National Committee for American Foreign Policy issued the invitation that enabled Adams to finally secure a visa to speak in New York in January 1994. Flynn serves on the boards of several Irish organizations and is known to be generous with financial support for worthy causes. A member of the Taoiseach's Economic Advisory Board.

**Charles (Chuck) Feeney:** Also a member of the Taoiseach's Economic Advisory Board and Chairman of the General Atlantic Group. His numerous business achievements include the founding of Duty Free Shoppers, a chain which operates duty-free shops in airports around the world. Is also active in the hotel business and has a hotel in Limerick. Unlike Flynn who has high visibility, Feeney tends to maintain a low profile.

**Bruce Morrison:** A former Congressman, the architect of the Morrison visa programme through which some 50,000 emigrant visas for Ireland were secured. He is now the Chairman of the US Federal Housing Finance Board having been appointed to this latter body by President Clinton. He is a co-chair of the Americans for a New Irish Agenda.

**Joe Jamison:** A New-York based union official and a member of the Irish American Labour Coalition. Jamison is a frequent visitor to Ireland and was among those to travel with US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown when he visited Ireland last December.

AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN

TELEPHONE: (202) 462-3939

FAX: (202) 232-5993



EMBASSY OF IRELAND

2234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008CONFIDENTIALSECURE FAX

17 July 1995

Dear Secretary

1. As already reported, I had a discussion last evening on the peace process, at their request, with Bruce Morrison and Niall O'Dowd.

Concern about peace process

2. Both Morrison and O'Dowd, even allowing for their particular sympathies, came across as genuinely and deeply worried about the future of the peace process. They said they were reflecting the views of the wider Irish and Irish-American community, who were extremely concerned about the present attitude of the British Government. If the process was not underpinned at an early stage by movement on the prisoners issue and, more importantly, by all-round political talks, it stood in serious risk of coming apart. This was their "realistic assessment" of the situation on the ground in the North.
3. Morrison expressed himself as so worried about a possible breakdown that he suggested that the Taoiseach might even consider travelling to Washington to brief the President and request his active intervention with London. I gently steered him away from this exaggerated suggestion; it will, however, give you a clear sense of the state of severe depression about the process that exists among the initiated in the community here at present.

Visit to Ireland

4. In pursuit of this concern, Morrison, O'Dowd, Flynn and Feeney will be visiting Ireland, North and South, next weekend. Their visit, I suspect, is particularly designed to convey

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support on the ground for Gerry Adams and to enable the group, on their return, to brief the White House on the acute danger facing the peace process. In this regard, O'Dowd said that he did not believe the process would last beyond the end of September if the British were not prepared to move forward, in particular towards all-party talks, at an early date. He and Morrison simply could not understand the attitude of John Major, especially given his earlier courageous and innovative approach. There was a unique opportunity now to resolve the problem - given in particular the leadership in Dublin, London and on the nationalist side in the North - but this had to be seized quickly. If not, O'Dowd said, Adams and McGuinness were likely to step down and make way for new personnel; he added, in this regard, that there would not be a split in Sinn Féin on the issue.

#### New York Times advertisement

5. The group were also proposing to place a further advertisement in the New York Times this week, and I will send you an advance copy of this as soon as possible.

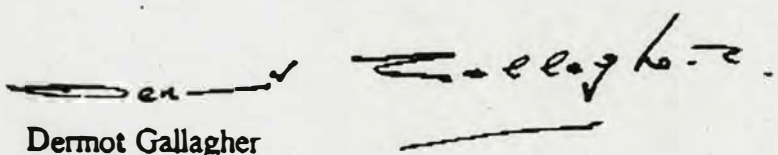
#### Máiréad Keane

6. The above concern is also being actively conveyed around Washington by the Sinn Féin representative here, Máiréad Keane. In this regard, Ms Keane said to me in private that Gerry Adams was quite taken aback by the attitude he found on the ground when he returned from South Africa and, as a result, had decided not to travel abroad again for some time. The only exception might be if he were to be received by the President on the anniversary of the ~~ceasefire~~, she accepted that this was unlikely but Sinn Féin might float the possibility of Hume and Adams being jointly received by Clinton at that time.
7. Separately, O'Dowd told me there was also something of a limited campaign in Belfast to undermine Adams; this was, for instance, reflected in responses in the Ormeau Road recently of "he's in the White House" to questions of "where's Gerry Adams".

Comment

- 8. All this is inevitably leading to pressure to involve the President directly at this time in putting pressure on the British to move forward. In this regard, Bruce Morrison will undoubtedly convey the message to the White House on his return from Ireland that the peace process is faltering and may well not exist by the time of the President's visit; if this is the case - he will suggest - a visit to Belfast by the President may have to be ruled out. Moreover, and very importantly, the end result could well be that one of the President's foreign policy successes will have been undermined, on the eve of his re-election campaign.
  
- 9. The above will also undoubtedly involve Morrison and his colleagues asking Dublin in trenchant terms to reiterate to the White House the urgent need for an active, direct intervention on their part with London.

Yours sincerely



Dermot Gallagher  
Ambassador

Seán O hUiginn Uas  
Secretary  
Anglo-Irish Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JULY 21, 1995



Taoiseach John Bruton, Prime Minister of Ireland



President Bill Clinton



John Major, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

## Peace in Ireland is a Two-Way Street, Mr. Major!

Until recently, the prospects for peace in Ireland had never been greater. The signing of the Downing Street Declaration and of the Joint Framework for Peace in Northern Ireland by the British and Irish governments were historic breakthroughs that brought hope for an end to 25 years of sectarian violence.

Since the beginning of the IRA ceasefire on August 31, 1994, followed by the Loyalist paramilitary ceasefire six weeks later, the world has watched as the hope and the dream for a non-violent future for generations of Irish and British people have taken root and flourished.

Now, however, because of the failure of political will by the British government in living up to its own declarations, the peace is endangered.

The recent release by British government executive order of Private Lee Clegg, a soldier convicted in British courts of shooting dead a 17-year-old West Belfast joyrider, is just the latest example of a double standard when it applies to Northern Ireland.

Today, almost a year into the ceasefire, not a single Republican or Loyalist prisoner has been released by the British government. This has led to the widespread belief that there continues to be one law for the British and one for all others in Northern Ireland. We believe that in the wake of the Clegg decision, the British government has a moral and political obligation to show imaginativeness, generosity and magnanimity in order to secure the peace in Northern Ireland.

Both the Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries have already shown courage and commitment in calling their ceasefires and sticking to them for almost one year, despite the evident lack of political progress. The announcement by President Clinton that he will visit Belfast in November is just the latest move by the U.S. to help shore up the peace. Recently the President's White House Economic Conference on Ireland was a major step forward to help the economy of

Ireland. The Irish government has released paramilitary prisoners, established a Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, and most importantly, accepted the *bona fide* of the paramilitary groups in their desires to try the political path. The government under Taoiseach (Prime Minister) John Bruton continues in many other ways to move the peace process forward.

But where is the "imaginative and generous response" that the British government offered prior to the IRA ceasefire, if and when such a cessation of violence happened?

Where are their commitments under the Joint Declaration and the Framework Agreement to "encourage, participate and enable agreement" between all parties?

Where is their commitment, contained in the Joint Declaration, to begin all-party talks as soon as the paramilitary parties committed to peaceful means, something they have now done for almost a year?

Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams has agreed that the arms issue will be discussed together with all other issues, in peace talks as has happened in every major conflict resolution this century. Why have the British continued their insistence on the IRA decommissioning before peace talks can begin?

Such a condition on decommissioning arms was never laid down in the IRA/British government secret talks prior to the IRA ceasefire. Neither was it ever mentioned as a condition in the Downing Street Declaration, and the Joint Framework. This insistence on handing in weapons before talks begin has been called by the Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring a "formula for disaster." Is this what the British want in Northern Ireland? Are they pursuing their old "divide and rule" strategy? Are they hoping to split the IRA by putting off, for as long as they can, meaningful talks which they had previously agreed to, thereby putting the leaders of

the movement who have risked their all on the peace process, at maximum risk? As Thomas L. Friedman, the distinguished foreign policy writer of *The New York Times* stated in a recent column, "Most of the Catholic and Protestant weapons are flaming bottles and small arms. They could hand them all in tomorrow and acquire new ones overnight. The priority is not to take away their weapons, but to take away their reasons for using them. The only way to do that is by starting the peace talks. If that doesn't happen soon, the first anniversary of the ceasefire is going to be the last."

Clearly with the release of Private Clegg, the British have made it obvious that they are not ready to reach out to those on the other side. Renewed rioting in Belfast, Derry and Portadown is an ominous warning that further delay will surely escalate the violence. The British government must reconcile itself to the reality that a refusal to act now and agree to all-party talks and prisoner discussions will mean the end of the greatest opportunity for peace in our lifetime.

We agree with the recent joint statement issued by Taoiseach John Bruton, Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Dick Spring, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, and SDLP leader John Hume, which said, "The current impasse in the peace process is a cause for concern to all who share that objective. Accordingly, we are seeking a commencement, as soon as possible, of the inclusive, all-party talks necessary to the achievement of our objective."

Mr. Major, you must *act now* — convene all-inclusive talks or be judged for your failure to act.

That would be unthinkable for the millions of Americans and people around the world who have been inspired by the example of what peace can bring to Ireland.

Advertisement paid for by Americans for Peace in Ireland — Niall O'Dowd, Chairman; Brian O'Dwyer, President

Americans for Peace in Ireland is dedicated to exploring non-violent ways to help bring peace to Northern Ireland, and to ensuring that Americans continue to play a positive role in the

## Americans For a New Irish Agenda

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**Bruce Morrison,  
Chair**

June 22, 1995

President William J. Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Your role in fostering the peace process in Ireland is one of the great success stories of your Administration's foreign policy. Time and again, your decisive personal intervention has moved the peace process forward.

Last month you brought together under one roof, for the first time in history, all Irish political parties at the White House Conference on Trade and Investment in Ireland. Millions of Irish Americans are grateful to you for that initiative and the many others you have taken.

It's clear to me that, without your personal intervention and sustained interest in finding a solution to the conflict, we would not have come as close as we have to a just and lasting peace in Ireland.

Yet, as we enter the tenth month of the IRA ceasefire, a new crisis is developing. The stalemate preventing all-party political talks is deepening. Talks between Sinn Fein and British government officials have now broken off. The Irish government and Irish political leaders continue to seek a way around the deadlock. The British government blames Irish republicans for the impasse. The truth is the opposite. The British government holds most of the cards, and is choosing a course that, unless changed, threatens to derail the peace process altogether.

The British government is insisting, before all-party talks, that the IRA decommission its weapons.

This is a calamitous position, I am convinced, and I am not alone in believing it. Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring has stated, "If we take the attitude that nothing will happen unless there is a surrender or decommissioning of arms then, I think, that is a formula for disaster."

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100 Park Ave. S., Room 1109 \* New York, N.Y. 10003 \* (212) 254-9271 \* FAX (212) 254-9276

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SDLP leader John Hume has urgently called on the British to enter such talks. "This is not just a request of the British government; it is their duty to do it." Former Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds, a father of the peace process, has stated that the British, by refusing Sinn Fein a place at the conference table, are not honoring the terms of the Downing Street Declaration. He has suggested that the issue of decommissioning should be taken out of the talks process and, possibly, submitted to an international commission. Leading figures in the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the Northern Ireland police, have stated that decommissioning is a matter of minor importance, so long as the guns are silent.

All sides in Northern Ireland want disarmament, but negotiations cannot succeed if one party is asked to surrender. The British stance now is a far cry from the "incredible generosity" promised by Sir Patrick Mayhew before the IRA ceasefire.

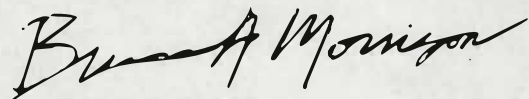
Mr. President, your personal involvement may again be crucial in rejuvenating the peace process. Please urge the British government to rapidly commence all-party talks. Those talks, in addition to discussing methods of achieving disarmament in Northern Ireland, should include:

- *Prisoner releases*, which affect thousands of families on both sides in Northern Ireland.
- *Reforms of the police*. The overwhelmingly Protestant RUC is perceived as a sectarian force by Northern nationalists. There must be progress towards a community police force acceptable to all sides.
- *Repeal of repressive legislation*. Both communities have a right to parity of esteem and equality of treatment as envisaged in the Downing Street Declaration and Framework Document.

On August 31, 1995 one year will have elapsed since the IRA ceasefire. The loyalist ceasefires followed some weeks later. Yet many in Northern Ireland see little progress on the real issues that affect their lives.

It is urgent that you seek to overcome the deepening stalemate, Mr. President. Your firm and visionary leadership and your insistence that all sides take risks for peace are needed once again.

Sincerely,



Bruce A. Morrison  
Chair