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Mr Crabb

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To me
P.S.*

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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

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SECURE FAX NO: 5F13

1 NOVEMBER 1995

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON
FOR B SCANNELL FROM P HENNESSY

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S/S O HUIGINN
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Gov Letter A-1

TRIMBLE VISIT

Meeting at the White House

1. Trimble met with the President, the Vice-President and Tony Lake at a meeting which lasted a little over half an hour; the President was present for about 10 minutes. The view afterwards in the White House was that the meeting had gone well, and that Trimble had shown signs of flexibility on his Assembly proposal. He had stressed its function as a forum for debate, and his openness to ideas as to how it might be structured. Responding to a question about nationalist interests, he suggested that experts on cross-border topics might be invited to give evidence. It was noted however that there was a presumption that this process would be complete before wider talks (Strands 2 and 3) would get under way.
2. The President stressed that the US was acting on an even-handed basis. Trimble welcomed this, and expressed appreciation for the President's strong support for the consent principal. Trimble stressed the importance of a balanced agenda for the President's trip to Northern Ireland, and was assured that this was precisely the intention.

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3. The US side indicated that the Assembly idea merited consideration, but said that the appropriate forum was the political track of the twin-track process. They have been at pains subsequently to stress that this does not represent an endorsement of the proposal. On decommissioning, the President preempted a prolonged discussion by stating that he had always seen it as an essential element in the peace process. Trimble referred approvingly to the President's remarks on the topic in his address at the White House Conference.

4. The Unionist delegation made a point of stating their interest in meeting with Hume. As it happened, Hume was entering the White House with a European Parliament delegation to meet with Lake as the Unionists were leaving, and was engaged by them in conversation in front of the media. We understand (from both sides) that following that meeting Lake asked Hume if his position on the Assembly had changed, and was told it had not.

Other Appointments

5. At a British Embassy (NI Bureau) organized lunch immediately after the White House meeting, Trimble characterized the meeting as very positive. He said that both sides were agreed on the importance of the application of the consent principle and of progress on decommissioning. The Administration would continue to reflect to Sinn Fein the importance of decommissioning. They had also discussed the twin-track process about which he said the Administration were more optimistic than he was. He went on to say that there had been a detailed discussion of his assembly proposal. Echoing a now familiar note, Trimble said that he had asked the Administration to convey to Hume his interest in a meeting to discuss the proposal.

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6. Following these remarks, Trimble moved around the room and met most of the (about 30) people present. In response to a fellow guest who suggested that while the Assembly might look after Strand I issues, there seemed to be no provision for Strands II and III, Trimble claimed that the mandate of the body would be sufficiently broad to allow it to encompass all these issues. Asked about the existing twin-track process, he said that it was very difficult to see it working and pointed a finger squarely at Sinn Fein. In a conversation with the undersigned, his line was that the twin-track should comprise the Assembly and the decommissioning body. //

Ad Hoc Committee

7. From the Capitol Hill side, there was a unanimously unfavorable read-out of the meeting between Trimble and the group chaired by Congressman Gilman. There were about 8 to 10 members present for the hour-long meeting. While Trimble's approach was thought to be discouraging, the real villain of the piece appeared to be Ken Maginnis. He was variously characterized as rude, abusive and discourteous. Many of those present thought they were witnessing a "good cop/bad cop" routine, except that the good cop also left a lot to be desired. Apart from insisting on the merits of their proposal for an assembly and on the need for decommissioning, two points were emphasized:
- if the twin-track was in trouble, it was because threats by Sinn Fein of a return to violence had forced the cancellation of the Summit;
 - Hume was frustrating their repeated efforts to meet with him.
8. It was commented afterwards that in their determination to paint Hume in a bad light, the visitors had said very little about their view of Adams' role in current events. Particular

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offence was caused by Trimble's reaction to a mild observation by Jim Walsh, Chairman of the Friends of Ireland, that progress would be helped by overcoming sectarian animosity. Trimble's response that it was impossible to separate religion from political issues was seen as both revealing and depressing.

9. In response to a straight question from Gilman as to why they could sit down with Sinn Fein in an Assembly but not in all-party talks, Trimble's reply was that there was a critical distinction between debate (Assembly) and negotiation (talks). For all that, Gilman indicated that he hopes to meet with the party when he visits Northern Ireland in January.

Meeting with Senator Kennedy

10. The Senator had been hoping to establish a sound personal relationship with the Unionist leader, and on that account their meeting was judged a success. After breakfast (for which the venue was switched from home to his office) Kennedy gave his guest a tour of the Senate, before their discussions began. Despite wide differences on the issues, the tone was always amicable, although there was a sense that Trimble never fully relaxed. Trimble's temper came close to showing only once - when taken up on claims that the Tanaiste had changed his stance on decommissioning - but otherwise he gave the impression of a man successfully struggling to stay in control.
11. On substance Trimble took the line that the prospects for success in the twin-track had effectively been ended by the September meeting between Sinn Fein and Irish Government officials "at Clonard Monastery". He pushed the Assembly as a way around this *impasse*. It would serve as a vehicle for political dialogue in the period ahead, and suggested that this was all the more important given that there was no prospect of all-

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was enhanced by a clearly focused message, which was reiterated at every opportunity:

- Sinn Fein have effectively scuppered the original twin-track process;
- an Assembly, suitably modified to meet "reasonable" Nationalist concerns, can secure Unionist involvement in the process;
- John Hume is unwilling to engage with Unionists.

- 16.. As to his capacity to contribute imaginatively to a settlement, for many here this remains an open question. Nevertheless the White House view of his "flexibility" on the Assembly proposal will help to further its credibility, although they will also take very seriously the concerns reiterated today by the SDLP leader. Finally, while Trimble may not be unduly concerned at the offence apparently caused to Irish-American politicians, at the very least an important opportunity, including in the context of the President's visit, to promote a less antagonistic dialogue between Unionists and Irish-America appears to have been missed.

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- party talks before autumn next year. He also left the clear impression that a revised twin-track would comprise (only) the Assembly and the decommissioning body.
12. He again complained that Hume was avoiding him and was not taking up offers of a direct meeting between them (it is fair to say that Hume vigorously contests this account, and states that their two secretaries have been trying to find a mutually convenient date, and that there was contact between the two offices on this only last week).
13. Shortly afterwards, Kennedy met with Hume who said that the Assembly idea should be included in the agenda for all-party talks. However, he stressed that it was strongly opposed in the Nationalist community, and if ever convened, would quickly degenerate into an unproductive shouting match. Speaking generally of the peace process, he stressed the good working relationship with the Government, and referred to the Taoiseach's successful visit to Derry last week. He claimed that the British were stalling on the convening of all-party talks and this was causing major problems with Sinn Fein. Following his meeting with Adams last Friday, he had spoken directly with London in advance of Tuesday's Ancram/McGuinness meeting and stressed the absolute importance of a more flexible approach.
14. Referring to the recent visit to London by Tony Lake and Nancy Soderberg, Kennedy expressed some doubt about its value, and said he thought the NSC team themselves had begun, before they left, to feel that their presence was becoming counter-productive.

Comment

15. Initial reaction to the visit suggests that Trimble came across as a substantial (if personally complex) figure, well able to handle himself on the wider stage. His impact

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Ulster Unionist Party

- North America

Leader of the Party
W. David Trimble, LL.B. M.P.
Director, North American Bureau
Jeffrey Donaldson
Bureau Coordinator
Anne W. Smith

Press Release - Washington, D.C. & Belfast, Wednesday, November 1, 1995

US President Clinton And the Ulster Unionist Leader Meet At The White House

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) of Northern Ireland met today in Washington, D.C. with President Clinton, Vice President, Gore and senior administrative officials.

The UUP represents the largest political constituency in Northern Ireland. Trimble is the first UUP leader to officially meet a United States President. He was accompanied to the White House by Ken McGinnis, MP (UUP Security Spokesperson); Reverend Martin Smyth MP (UUP International Director), Jeffrey Donaldson, Honorary Secretary and Anne Smith, Bureau Coordinator of UUP North America.

Mr. Trimble, during an impromptu White House press conference, immediately following his meeting with the President of the United States said, "It was an honor today for our Ulster Unionist Party Delegation to meet President Clinton, Vice President Gore and others in the United States Administration who actively support a lasting peace, constitutional democracy, expanded job producing economic development and investment in Ulster: and increased education, cultural and civic links between the United States and Northern Ireland.

Our discussions with the President, Vice President Gore, Cabinet, Republican and Democratic Congressional representatives and American Business, trade associations and diplomatic leaders have been frank, constructive and encouraging.

The UUP is committed to dialogue with any credible source, who is prepared to discuss on a level and acceptable playing field how the issues of peace, democracy and economic development can be most effectively and fairly advanced with respect for our two traditions and for the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland.

Based on our discussions throughout three days of extensive talks on the major political, policy and peace issues being addressed for the people of Ulster, I believe that it is time for concerted action by government, business and community leaders to 'get off the fence' and move beyond the current impasse.

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On that subject, the UUP challenges those in positions of power in the United Kingdom and the United States to join with our party to accomplish the following objectives.

PEACE The UUP challenges the Loyalist paramilitary leadership to take the courageous first step and moral high ground by beginning the process of disarmament, as quickly as possible - it is in the best interests of all of the citizens of Northern Ireland that this critical action toward a secure, safe and lasting peace in our Province is begun and that the IRA match any initiative by the Loyalist paramilitary leaders.

DEMOCRACY The UUP challenges the UK government to set a date for all party local elections to a Northern Ireland Assembly or Constitutional Convention with the leaders of all democratically elected political parties in Northern Ireland. It offers the most realistic option to move the democratic process forward and achieve an inclusive dialogue involving all parties.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT The UUP challenges government and business leaders involved with economic development, Northern Ireland - United States trade and investment to help increase the international competitiveness of Ulster's manufacturing and service industries, expand exports and increase business entrepreneurship. The Clinton Administration's commitment to help improve these critical objectives is admirable and the UUP urges American business leaders in Northern Ireland and Ulster firms trading with the United States to support the development of a Belfast based American Chamber of Commerce - Northern Ireland (affiliated with the American Chamber - UK) to consolidate our business relationship with the United States.

President Clinton's Visit To Northern Ireland The UUP challenges the US Administration to ensure that the historic first visit by a President of the United States to Northern Ireland is on a balanced itinerary that gives equal access to the people of both traditions, Unionist and Nationalist, to greet the American leader in their respective communities. The people of Ulster are honored by the President spending time in our Province and he will be assured a warm welcome. When Air Force One lands at Belfast International Airport, the Gateway to Ulster, for international tourist and business travellers, the media will share a much needed message with the world - that a safe, secure and peaceful Northern Ireland is a beautiful European region with legendary hospitality and fine people who want increased tourism, investment and business.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 1, 1995

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

The Vice President met for almost an hour today with the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, David Trimble. The President joined them for part of the meeting. The focus of the discussion was the peace process in Northern Ireland.

The President and the Vice President expressed continued U.S. support for the efforts of the British and Irish Governments and the people of Northern Ireland to reach a just and lasting settlement. They underscored their view that such a settlement must be based on the consent of both communities of Northern Ireland.

The President and the Vice President expressed the view that the twin-track proposal supported by the British and Irish Governments offers a basis for progress in the peace process and for addressing seriously the issue of decommissioning of weapons. They exchanged views with Mr. Trimble on his proposal for an elected assembly in Northern Ireland.

The President discussed with Mr. Trimble his planned visit to Northern Ireland on November 30. He underscored that he is looking forward to meeting with people from both traditions and hearing their views on how to achieve a lasting peace.

cc.
- Ambassador
- All Offices