

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2021/51/608
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

PSM; PSS; Messrs. Teahon, Mansergh & Dalton; Ambassadors London & Washington; Joint Secretary; Counsellors A-I

AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN
TELEPHONE: (202) 462-3939
FAX: (202) 232-5993

EMBASSY OF IRELAND
2234 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

7 July 1997

DISCUSSIONS WITH WHITE HOUSE

Dear Secretary

1. Pat Hennessy and I had a number of discussions today with Mary Ann Peters, the Director for Europe at the National Security Council, about the British decision on the Garvaghy Road Parade and its wider implications.

2. In conveying the Government's views about the decision, we were essentially preaching to the converted. Peters accepted fully that, while she would not have wished in any way to be in Mo Mowlam's or the Chief Constable's shoes, the British had "made the wrong decision". She particularly regretted that the Secretary of State had "got such a black eye" on the issue as she instinctively feels that in Mo Mowlam we are all dealing with a person of honour. The reality was, however, that the British had made "a bad call".

3. In public, and while the White House accepted privately that the decision was unfortunate, they decided not to criticise it for two reasons. In the first place, they did not feel they should second guess the British on the security front, at least on this issue. Secondly, and understandably, they needed to preserve their ability to exercise private leverage on the British, and felt that this could be weakened if they adopted other than a neutral position on the march decision.

4. As indicated, we also discussed in detail the impact of the decision on the nationalist

©DFA/2021/51/608

community and its implications for the wider peace process. I emphasised in particular that, if Drumcree were to set the pattern for the rest of the marching season, then we faced a very serious situation indeed. We now needed an urgent signal from the British that this was not the case. In this regard, I argued that a balancing decision on the forthcoming Ormeau Road march, together with some significant generosity on the prisoners issue, would be very helpful. Peters agreed, saying she believed that, in addition to balancing decisions on future parades, the British should now reach outside the parades context and show flexibility in relation to prisoners. She said that the President was briefed to make these two points, if Northern Ireland came up in his discussion with Tony Blair in the margins of the Madrid NATO Summit. Moreover, following our discussion, she would now send a further message to Madrid underlining the importance we attached to both points.

5. Peters said she would come back to me as soon as she had a read out on any discussion in Madrid from Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser, or his Deputy, Jim Steinberg, both of whom are with the President at the Summit.

Yours sincerely

Dermot Gallagher
Ambassador

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

©DFA/2021/51/608