

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2021/51/621
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.

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



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

13 November, 1997

To: A-I Division From: Washington

For: Dermot Brangan From: Adrian O'Neill

c/c: Dan Mulhall; Adrian McDaid; Michael Gaffey

Re: SoS Mowlam's Press Briefing

1. SoS Mowlam gave a breakfast press briefing this morning at the British Embassy at the start of her one day visit to Washington. I understand that the briefing was well attended and included representatives of the Irish, British and US press (including the ***Washington Post***, ***New York Times*** and ***Baltimore Sun***). According to press contacts, SoS Mowlam said nothing that was particularly new or startling; for those who were familiar with Northern Ireland, "no new ground was broken".

2. My contacts indicated that the following issues were covered:

   - In regard to the **cease-fires**, Mowlam said that the IRA cease-fire was stable. The quality of the cessation was good if not better than the previous cease-fire. The recent manifestations of dissidence within the Republican movement had been over-played by the media. Such turbulence was to be expected and she had no reason to believe that it would effect the cease-fire. The important thing was that the Mitchell Principles, which are fundamental to the process, were still being adhered to.

   - While the security forces were keeping an eye on the **CAC**, they had not yet become a big problem. However, when asked about demilitarisation, the SoS appeared to contradict herself somewhat by saying that the continuing threat from the CAC inhibited the scope for rapid movement in this area.

©DFA/2021/51/621

- The SoS gave very precise information in regard to prison transfers; she said that only one transfer applicant (from Britain to NI) remained in a British jail and this was because of his pending appeal.

- On the Talks, the SoS gave a fairly positive and upbeat assessment without any indication of a lack of engagement by the parties. She said that the British Government was aiming for "May with a vengeance" to achieve agreement. Decommissioning was a vital part of the process and there would have to be a compromise on this issue in the Talks.

- In response to a question about "Catholic grievances", the SoS referred to the recent **SACHR** report on fair employment. She indicated that while a full response would be forthcoming in the New Year, the British Government was already in the process of implementing some of these recommendations. However, she also suggested that some of the recommendations may lack validity and might be contradictory.

- On **Bloody Sunday**, the SoS indicated that there would an announcement soon. In a somewhat confused comment she expressed the hope - without apparent great confidence - that the British Government response would help the situation.

- On the **US role**, the SoS said that she was not asking for anything new. She hoped that the Administration would maintain its existing helpful approach. Moreover, she wished to maintain US business support for the peace process; trade and investment would be an important feature of her current visit to the US. Asked whether Senator Mitchell would leave the Talks within the next year, the SoS said that she could not address such a hypothetical question.

- On **President McAleese**, she described the inauguration speech as wonderful but said it was too early to assess what kind of impact she would have on the Northern Ireland situation.

END
PAGES (2)

©DFA/2021/51/621