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Reference Code: 2021/100/14

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IMMEDIATE

23 JULY 1998

TO HQ
FOR SECRETARY GALLAGHER

FROM WASHINGTON
FROM P HENNESSY

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Adrian O'Neill
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MO MOWLAM IN WASHINGTON

1. Mo Mowlam yesterday completed a short visit to Washington which included meetings at the White House and on Capitol Hill as well as a media program (on which Adrian O'Neill has reported). She also had lunch with the First Lady, who, as you know, will be principal speaker at the Vital Voices conference in Belfast.
2. Overall themes stressed in both private meetings and public utterances were the magnitude of the achievements to date in the peace process, allied with a confidence that, despite set-backs, the momentum would be sustained. In dealing with the Quinn murders and issues relating generally to the behavior of the Orange Order and its supporters, Mowlam clearly found it useful to link these events, to the point of equivalence, with the murder of Andrew Kearney. This is, of course, not merely convenient from a British perspective, but fits with the concern about buttressing Trimble which Mowlam outlined to the Ambassador at their meeting (see separate report) at the start of the visit.
3. According to Larry Butler, NSC, Mowlam used the meeting with National Security Adviser Sandy Berger to emphasize the pressures on Trimble, pointing particularly to his party conference in the Autumn. She noted, for example, that

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he was alone on the Unionist benches in support of the Settlement Bill. He needed help - and she cited a move by the IRA on decommissioning as one obvious place to start. There was interest on the White House side in possibilities of a Trimble - Adams meeting, allied to a recognition that things needed to be in train well before the President's visit, if it was to serve any purpose in that area. More generally, Butler said that the White House, while sympathetic to the need to assist Trimble, recognize that Sinn Fein have "bought and paid for" their place at the negotiating table, and are not attracted to the view that a further prolonged period of negotiation is required before such a meeting can take place.

4. A good deal of the discussion was taken up with possible options for the President's schedule in Northern Ireland. The US side is keen to show support for the new institutions, and floated the idea of a meeting (possibly a special session) with the Assembly. Mowlam was initially sceptical - seeing it as a high risk: who would turn up; DUP role etc. - but agreed to consider further and will consult with Trimble, Mallon and others on her return. Possible intermediate steps would include a meeting with Assembly members, but not in formal session. Butler accepted my point that ways should also be found to underscore US support for the North-South dimension, so that the agreement be highlighted in all its aspects.
5. The risk from dissident elements was also raised by Mowlam, but in terms which suggested to Butler that she was paying some attention to the Ambassador's advice on the subject. However, as Adrian O'Neill has reported, she pursued the issue with greater vigor at the earlier press breakfast, thereby setting the tone for media coverage and causing concern in the White House, which very much agrees with our analysis. At the later meeting with the Friends /Ad Hoc on Capitol Hill, she

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reverted to the issue (although in fairly circumspect terms). Peter King specifically put it to her that raising the specter of a Martin Galvin / Sands-McKevitt faction was both a mis-reading of the actual situation - where their support in the US was minimal - and tactically foolish. He told her that Galvin, for example, would like nothing more than to be labeled a serious threat to British interests.

6. Mowlam indicated that the US multi-city investment tour would get under way around 9 October (probably starting in New York). Chancellor Gordon Brown and Mowlam will take part in the initial stages, with Adam Ingram expected to substitute in the course of the tour. Senator Kennedy promised to be helpful for the Boston leg. The format at each stop apparently will comprise an open forum multi-media presentation, combined with the targeting of individual companies.

Capitol Hill

7. Other points raised at the Hill meeting were concerns (reflecting Embassy briefing) about the Settlement bill, including in the human rights area: Mowlam avoided specifics, but emphasised her openness to amendments. On the next phase of implementation (Sinn Fein in the Executive etc) she indicated that the British Government would push ahead, but that in the end the pace would be set by the Assembly. On demilitarization in South Armagh, she said Blair wanted to move, but that a security force presence was necessary to stop bombs "coming through from the South". (The meeting was less than satisfactory because of interruptions by votes, and, to the irritation of others, a fixation by Rep Chris Smith on the abortion issue).

8. Kennedy and Dodd also raised concerns about the equality agenda. Mowlam's response was described as confused, but included comments to the effect that the human rights groups were at odds in their prescriptions, and that there was in some quarters an effort to secure by the back-door what had proved unattainable in the negotiations. She mentioned Martin Galvin, but in a round-about fashion, asking the Senators to speak out if this group became a problem in the future. Mowlam did not advert to the issue in subsequent press comment.

Vital Voices

9. Latest signal on the Vital Voices conference is that the idea of having the event immediately contiguous to the Visit is again in favor - but this is a constantly changing scenario and clearly not a final determination.

Springvale

10. We understand informally that while in New York Mowlam pursued discussions with Loretta Brennan-Glucksman on a \$5m donation to Springvale. While there is as yet no commitment, discussions are said to have gone well. If confirmed, the contribution would be channeled through the American Ireland Fund, and would be suitably acknowledged during the President's visit to Belfast.

Balcomb Street

11. Finally, in the course of conversation about the visit Peter King mentioned that he had been contacted by Eddie Butler's sister in New York, complaining that our authorities had refused an application by Butler for 3 days leave to meet with visiting relatives. I undertook to check the matter and revert.