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E-MAIL MESSAGE

August 18, 1999

To HQ from Washington
For G Ansbro from T Russell
CC R Montgomery

Subj: Letter from Mo Mowlam to Sandy Berger re Gun-Running Episode

1. Through contacts in W/ton we have heard that Mo Mowlam has written to Sandy Berger about possible implications of the recent gun-running episode for her judgement regarding the IRA cease-fire. Our inquiries with the White House (Dick Norland, Irish Desk) have confirmed that SoS Mowlam rang Jim Steinberg about the issue on 16 August and followed up yesterday with a letter to Berger. Norland has given us the following read-out of what is involved.

2. The letter begins by pointing out that the SoS has a statutory duty under the NI Sentences Act to monitor the status of the cease-fires. On return from holidays she had been briefed on the arrests of some people, with possible links to the IRA, for gun-running in the USA. In view of the fact that these activities had taken place within the USA she would be grateful for any information relevant to the judgement she would have to make on the status of the IRA cease-fire.

3. While wishing to be as helpful as possible, the White House are hesitant to have the NSC become directly involved and want to avoid having to provide any formal written assessment to the SoS. At this stage, their inclination is to appoint an interlocutor from within the system (probably from the AG's Office) who would liaise with the SoS's Office. While the FBI are willing to share a good deal of factual information, they are cautious about leaking any data on their sources and methods. They also wish to avoid being quoted in any formal judgement made by the SoS.

4. We understand that the SoS has also written formally to our Minister about the same issue. Glad any information you may have on how the issue is evolving in Dublin.

END

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SECURE FAX

To HQ from Washington
For G Ansbro from T Russell

20 August 1999

Subj: Recent Events

1. Gun-running episode

I spoke again this afternoon with Dick Norland (Irish Desk, White House) about their draft reply to Mo Mowlam's letter requesting USA assistance in determining if the gun-running episode might be relevant to her consideration of the IRA ceasefire. The White House remain quite firm in their resistance to becoming involved. Norland repeated that, while they will be helpful about the facts, they cannot be cited in any determination the SoS may make. They are also concerned about the possible effects that any cooperation (however informal) might have on the US judicial process . They have still not appointed a liaison person from within the AG's Office and will not do so until next week at the earliest.

2. Arrest of Gerard Rice et al

Cong R Neal 's Office have informed us that he has been contacted by supporters of Gerard Rice about the latter's arrest and that the Congressman (who is in his district in Massachusetts at the moment) will write to Mo Mowlam early next week about the event. He felt that it was unacceptable that a normal group of protestors should be treated in this way. I told the office that we had raised our concerns through the Secretariat in Belfast.

END

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