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British Embassy  
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*Dear David,*

**NORTHERN IRELAND: SPECIAL ENVOY**

1. Former Congressman Bruce Morrison, Head of "Irish Americans for Clinton" and the recipient of the infamous letter from Governor Clinton supporting a special envoy, came to see Richard Ralph and me this afternoon. He has consulted various Irish American groups and the Irish Embassy and after talking to us would have a meeting with the Clinton transition team.

2. Morrison said Clinton had a political obligation to do something on the special envoy. He could either keep his promise constructively or pay a price domestically for breaking it. Morrison saw his role as ensuring that Clinton did something constructive. He would then bow out. Morrison thought the British press had over-reacted to Clinton's letter. Clinton, and he, were clearly on record as condemning violence. The purpose of the envoy initiative was not to "stick it to the Brits", even if that was what some of the more extreme supporters of the idea wanted to do. The idea was to make a constructive contribution to ending violence and the achievement of a political settlement. We explained that the reaction in the UK to the letter indicated the extreme sensitivity of this subject across the whole political spectrum.

3. Morrison then set out his thinking on the envoy in some detail. He did not envisage an Irish American filling the role: an Irish American like Flynn would have too much baggage. He envisaged instead someone completely independent, like Jimmy Carter, or someone in the same mould but of lower profile such as Theodore Keel, the labour negotiator. The envoy would have to be more than just a fact finder, and would need to do more than just talk to people and then report. US Embassies and Consulates were already doing this. The envoy should be an intermediary, and should not rule out talking to any individual or party from the outset, although it might be that talking to Sinn Fein would lead others to refuse to talk to the envoy and this might be sufficient reason to exclude Sinn Fein. It was crucial that the envoy have an economic dimension but it would not be satisfactory to make it into simply

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an economic initiative. The economic aspect would be more private investment than Government aid. It might be possible to engage the Irish American community in encouraging investment on an All-Ireland basis that would help engender greater understanding between North and South. The envoy would depend entirely on the executive but, of course, keep Congress informed. Morrison said the idea could only go ahead if both British and Irish Governments consented, but equally the idea would not go away if we simply obstructed it.

4. We agreed to report his ideas. They would need very careful handling. We made clear to Morrison that our over-riding priority was getting talks going again. We did not want anything to cut across that aim. Morrison agreed and said the manner and timing of any appointment of an envoy could be adjusted to ensure this did not happen. We said it had proved difficult to find a chairman in the talks who was acceptable to all parties. It would be even more difficult to find anyone to send as an envoy who was acceptable to all. We emphasised above all the importance of putting any ideas on this subject privately to British and Irish Governments rather than conducting megaphone diplomacy. Morrison took the point. We said the Prime Minister and Sir Patrick Mayhew would be visiting the US in the coming months and this would provide an opportunity to discuss any ideas.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Jonathan Powell*

J N Powell

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