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UNDER/ SEC 447/1
14 JAN 1993
CENT SEC

ASST SEC MM 392/1
15 JAN 1993
CENT SEC

FROM: G R ARCHER
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND DEPARTMENT

DATE: 11 JANUARY 1993

cc	Mr Thomas	B
	Mr Bell	B
	Mr Watkins	B
	Mr Williams	B
	Mr Cooke	B
	Mr Hill	B
	Mr Stephens	B

1. cc Mr McNeill
2. ~~Mr McNeill~~

14.1

Mr [unclear] Mr Murphy

Mr Brooker
NIO, B

NORTHERN IRELAND: POLICIES OF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

1. I have just seen copies of Mr Molyneux's letter of 6 January to President-Elect Clinton and of Jonathan Powell's letter of 6 January to you from Washington.
2. We have, with the agreement of our Ambassador in Washington, advised against too precipitate a reaction to the Clinton/Morrison exchange. The Ambassador has meanwhile had some useful contacts with the Clinton team. The Prime Minister did not have time to touch on Northern Ireland with the President-Elect when they spoke in December, but we shall wish to recommend that it should be an agenda item when they meet in February.
3. As seen from the FCO we are unlikely to gain by trying to make further running on this subject immediately. The incoming Administration is unlikely to rush decisions on this subject. At the same time we should recognise that the lobby will not allow it to go away. Morrison may be right that the Administration will find it too difficult to wriggle out of their commitment to send an envoy to Northern Ireland. Any discussion with Unionists in Washington would only increase the pressures on them from the other side and in this sense the Molyneux initiative could be counterproductive.

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4. We shall need to keep in mind that the Administration will have to nail their colours to the mast on 17 March in the traditional St Patrick's Day message if not before. But it looks against this timescale as if a meeting between the Prime Minister and President in February could be well timed to make our pitch. This fits in well with the line Jonathan Powell took with Morrison.

5. We shall need to give fairly early thought to the line to recommend in a brief for a February summit on an Envoy. My view remains that in present circumstances there is unlikely to be any advantage for us in any US 'initiative'. The risks are similar to launching well intentioned legislative proposals on the Hill: less well intentioned people will try to get their hands on the wheel. If we succeed in getting talks back on the road ahead of local elections we do not need the diversion of a high powered emissary talking to all, including Sinn Fein. The best the Americans could do for us in these circumstances would be to wish the new talks well.

6. The best fallback would be to have a low key US visitor here to be briefed on the talks and the economic needs. This is assuming that the incoming Administration is not disposed to send someone with an exclusively economic remit, but I assume this is unlikely.

7. Perhaps we could have a word about how to coordinate a further steer to the Chancery in Washington about all this?

signed

G R ARCHER

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