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3/1/94 ~~12/99~~ Sec 1
W. W. J. Adams

From: TONY BEETON
TPU
23 MARCH 1994

- cc: PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- ~~PS/Mr Fell~~ - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Shannon - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Marsh - B
- Mr White - B

ASST SEC 488/3
25 MAR 1994
CENT MBW SEC

1140/5
24 MAR 1994
a Mr Williams
in the center

Mr Rickard - B

TERRORIST DISSOCIATION, REINTEGRATION AND THE LAWS OF SPAIN, ITALY, FRANCE AND GERMANY

I hope you and colleagues will forgive my chipping in on this debate. I did not see your original minute of 25 February, but I believe that I have seen the paper which you attached in a different context. It is a subject on which I have spent some time since the early 1980s, in particular becoming quite familiar on the ground with the situation in the Spanish Basque country (where I met several "reinserted" former members of ETA).

Like Mr Marsh, I am far from convinced that there is any simple read across to Northern Ireland from the Spanish situation. It is certainly true that reinsertion was used for members of ETA-pm when that organisation disbanded. It must be remembered though, that this was in the early 80s when the process of transformation from Franco's dictatorship to democracy was (in the eyes of most Spaniards) incomplete. Coming to terms with those who had taken up arms against the dictatorship was a very special circumstance which has no analogue in Northern Ireland. There was too, throughout the 80s, a parallel, unofficial reinsertion process which affected many former militants of ETA - ETA-militar as well as poli-mili - supported as much by Herri Batasuna as the other nationalist parties in Euzkadi. I agree with Mr Marsh's point that what was happening was an endgame of sorts, though it has turned out to be remarkably prolonged.

Two other brief observations on Mr Marsh's comments about Spain. Firstly, I would not myself seek to push the distinction between the "separatist" ETA and the "not separatist" IRA. The similarities between separatist Basque and Irish nationalisms are quite marked, and more useful analytically in this context than their differences. The more important point is that, despite the differences of organisation between ETA and the IRA, the trickiest security problem for the Spanish - now the autonomous Basque

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Government too - has not been the substantial number of terrorists 'on the run' - the exiles in France and the comandos ilegales, but, more like our difficulties in Northern Ireland and Great Britain, the comandos legales and networks of afichados people with no police record living and working openly in the community but engaged in clandestine activity on behalf of ETA. Frequently reinsertion for such people is simply a question of stopping armed activity and shifting, for example, to political involvement with Herri Batasuna or one of the other radical political groupings in the Basque country. This being so, the political dimensions of recent changes among the Basque people and their attitudes to ETA may offer more of a lesson to us than the reinsertion laws.

The French, German and Italian (with one important exception) situations all have the key difference of involving non-nationalist political terrorism. One could develop a comparative analysis in a serious way, but I think the conclusion would not be very different to my own shorthand one - that the nature of recruitment and support for the RAF, the Red Brigades, Action Direct etc. could be characterised as "intellectual" as opposed to the "visceral" processes affecting those involved in nationalist groups. The latter have proved much the tougher nuts to crack wherever in the world they occur.

The Italian exception I mentioned is the one to which Mr Williams drew attention. The Mafia - arguably - conforms more closely to the model of a nationalist terrorist organisation, and it has proved (quite unlike the Red Brigades) very resilient even in the face of dramatic supergrass trials. It remains to be seen whether the political changes in Italy can weaken the Mafia's grip where the determined application of security policies has failed.

Signed

TONY BEETON
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
23 MARCH 1994

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Mr. Egan (Asst Sec)
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Director (TFU)
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