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● Leeann Hindes

11/02/2000 09:43 AM

To: Ps Ministers/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Pamela Ferguson/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, John McKervill/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Pamela Stewart/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Jenny Conway/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Valerie Parkinson/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Fiona Dynes/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Colin Ross/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Paul Pringle/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Dara Cosgrove/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Mark Larmour/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP, Ciara Magee/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP

cc:

Subject: GM/811/2000 - Northern Ireland Bureau - The US View: October

For information only

Thank you.

----- Forwarded by Leeann Hindes/OFMDFM/DFP on 02/11/2000 09:32 -----

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**Correspondence**

Reference Number:  
GM/811/2000

|                 |                                                     |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Subject:        | The US View: October                                |
| Letter From:    | Dr Peter Smyth<br>Director, Northern Ireland Bureau |
| To:             | First Minister<br>Deputy First Minister             |
| Date of Letter: | 02/11/2000                                          |

Referred To: **PS/FM&DFM (PO)** on 02/11/2000

*Mrs. Maystone*

Copied To For Information: PS/Mr Haughey  
PS/Mr Nesbitt  
Mr Haire  
Mr McKervill  
Mr Campbell  
Mr Kerr  
Dr Gudgin  
Mr Larkin  
Mr Logue  
Mr Barrington  
Mr Ross  
Mr Larmour  
Mr Pringle  
Mrs Cosgrove  
Ms Magee

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Action taken: ☐ Advice attached } Plus one copy  
☐ Draft reply attached } Plus one copy  
☐ NIL return

Signed:

Date:

**Leeann Hinds (Private Office)**

**THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

**Parliament Buildings Tel: 028 9052 1639**

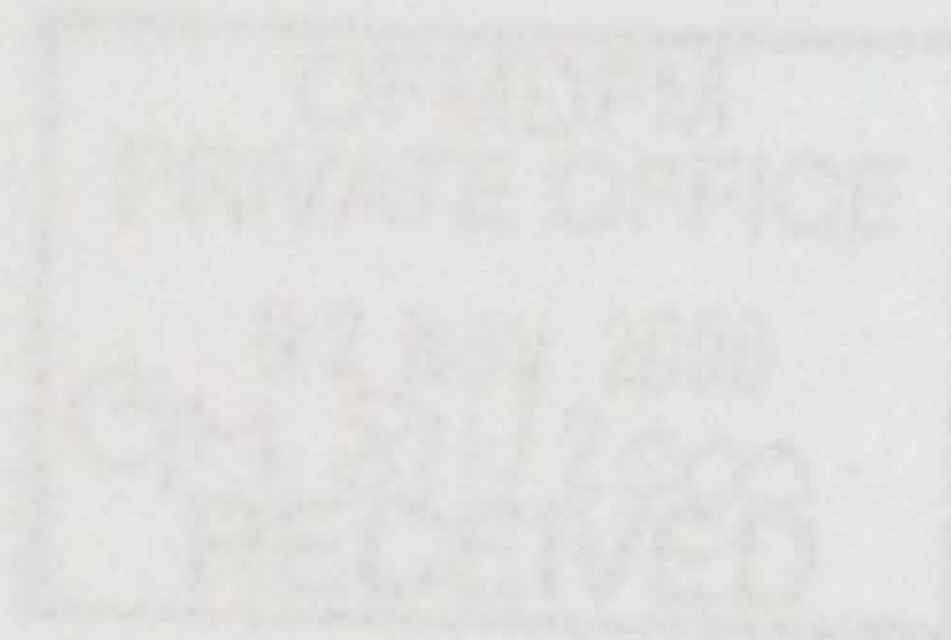
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northern  
IRELAND

NORTHERN IRELAND BUREAU  
THE IRISH TIMES, OCTOBER (3)



Media

There was no room for doubt as to the big Northern Ireland story in the second part of October. The meeting of the UUP Council, and the working out of the strategy announced by David Trimble at that meeting, dominated the headlines.

The New York Times in particular took pains to set out the issues that would be at stake in the 23<sup>rd</sup> October meeting, and quoted Paul Bew, Richard English, David McKinstry, Stephen O'Leary and Brian Feeney on the possible consequences of the Good Friday Agreement initiative collapsing. In an editorial on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, the same paper urged Protestants in Northern Ireland not to jeopardise the Agreement on account of necessary and desirable reforms to the RUC, while simultaneously urging the IRA to renounce its violent claims by demonstrating "a real embrace of disarmament". On the grounds that the clock could not be turned back, The Irish Echo called Sir David Trimble to display decency in recognising the new realities in Northern Ireland, even if such decency resulted in the triumph of his opponents. The Irish Voice asked Sir David to display the fighting spirit that had been evident at the UUP Party Conference, but was disappointed that he might seek a compromise position instead. The Boston Herald outlined the basis of Jeffrey Donaldson's position on decommissioning.

Reporting the Council meeting, The New York Times focused on the fact that Mr Trimble had survived the challenge from within his party, but refused to speculate on the possible consequences of the position he had taken in order to do so. The Boston Globe saw the outcome of the meeting as a further crisis for the peace process, and quoted at length the critical reactions of the other political parties. The Baltimore Sun, in a slight misreading of the situation, speculated that Sinn Féin might defy the order barring the party from key meetings until the IRA started to disarm. In a thoughtful piece in the Boston Globe Kevin Collins summarised what he saw as the outcome of the UUP meeting - it had allowed Mr Trimble to temporarily sideline his opponents within the party, but had done so at the price of putting in motion a train of events that was bound to lead to resistance and possibly negotiation. The Christian Science Monitor called for everyone concerned to take a balanced view of the situation, and for a renewal of the vision that had brought about the GFA in the first place.

Northern Ireland Bureau

British Embassy

3100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW • Washington, DC 20008-5000

Tel (202) 462-7500/7541 • Personal Assistant (202) 583-7542 • Fax (202) 631-7005

# northern IRELAND

## NORTHERN IRELAND BUREAU THE US VIEW: OCTOBER (2)



### Media

There was no room for doubt as to the big Northern Ireland story in the second part of October. The meeting of the UUP Council, and the working out of the strategy announced by David Trimble at that meeting, dominated the headlines.

*The New York Times* in particular took pains to set out the issues that would be at stake in the 28<sup>th</sup> October meeting, and quoted Paul Bew, Richard English, David McKittrick, Brendan O'Leary and Brian Feeney on the possible consequences of the Good Friday Agreement initiative collapsing. In an editorial on 20<sup>th</sup> October, the same paper urged Protestants in Northern Ireland not to jeopardise the Agreement on account of necessary and desirable reforms to the RUC, while simultaneously urging the IRA to remove Protestant distrust by demonstrating "a real embrace of decommissioning". On the grounds that the clock could not be turned back, *The Irish Echo* called for David Trimble to display honesty in recognising the new realities in Northern Ireland, even if such honesty resulted in the triumph of his opponents. *The Irish Voice* asked for him to display the fighting spirit that had been evident at the UUP Party Conference, but was concerned that he might seek a compromise position instead. *The Boston Herald* outlined the basis of Jeffrey Donaldson's position on decommissioning.

Reporting the Council meeting, *The New York Times* focussed on the fact that Mr Trimble had survived the challenge from within his party, but refused to speculate on the possible consequences of the position he had taken in order to do so. *The Boston Globe* saw the outcome of the meeting as a further crisis for the peace process, and quoted at length the critical reactions of the other political parties. *The Baltimore Sun*, in a slight misreading of the situation speculated that Sinn Féin might defy the order barring the party from key meetings until the IRA started to disarm. In a thoughtful piece in the *Boston Globe* Kevin Cullen summarised what he saw as the outcome of the UUP meeting - it had allowed Mr Trimble to temporarily sideline his opponents within the party, but had done so at the price of putting in motion a train of events that was bound to lead to stalemate and possibly suspension. *The Christian Science Monitor* called for everyone concerned to take a balanced view of the situation, and for a renewal of the vision that had brought about the GFA in the first place.

## **Northern Ireland Bureau**

British Embassy

3100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW • Washington, DC 20008-3600

Tel: (202) 588-7840/7841 • Personal Assistant (202) 588-7842 • Fax: (202) 588-7905

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Other issues were relegated to the sidelines. The New York Irish papers devoted some space to the implications of the murder of Joseph O'Connor. An *Irish Echo* editorial suggested that there was an inconsistency in Republicans demanding radical reform of the RUC, and simultaneously making excuses for murder decreed by a kangaroo court. Coverage was also given to the wider implications of the O'Connor attack, particularly as it impacted on the debate said to be taking place within the US system about the merits or otherwise of placing RIRA on the State Department's list of illegal organisations. The *Irish Voice* continued to press the Irish credentials of Al Gore and Hillary Clinton as public representatives, while the *Echo* carried a full page endorsement of Rick Lazio signed by Representative Peter King, who described his colleague as the best candidate "for the future of New York State, for the future of the US, and for the future of Ireland". The *Miami Herald* reviewed the debate about precisely what federal prosecutor Richard Scruggs had said about arms smuggling being sanctioned by the IRA leadership; while the *Toronto Globe and Mail* compared the debate about flags in Northern Ireland with the controversy in Canada, where Quebec's insistence on flying only the Fleur-de-lis brings it into dispute with federal government demands that the Maple Leaf is appropriate for municipal buildings.

#### Visits and Other Activity

Visits were received from British Council officials, and a representative of the Victim's Support Unit. As part of preparatory work on future representation in the US, discussions took place with a property management agency to get an idea of current prices for office space in downtown Washington. Exploratory talks were also held in connection with the design and operation of a dedicated Bureau website. A reception was sponsored for an Irish history conference in Gainesville, Florida. The event provided a useful speaking opportunity for Norman Houston to address approximately 60 academics on recent developments in Northern Ireland.

Looking ahead, work is proceeding in connection with the forthcoming US visits of Sir Reg Empey and Martin McGuinness, scheduled for mid-November. The Bureau also plans to provide a briefing on its role to a group of NI business executives who will be in Washington next week under the auspices of the University of Ulster.

P. Smyth.

Peter Smyth (Dr)  
Director, Northern Ireland Bureau  
1<sup>st</sup> November 2000