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1. cc PS/hm full
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2. hm King

Have we seen it? 2 1/1

Ambassador

From: Peter Westmacott
Date: 25 September 19941. cc Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Maccabecc Minister
Mr Powell
Mr Bean

2. Mr Coleman

UNDER/
SEC

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Mr Lyne, No 10 } By
Mr Archer, RID, } FAX
Mr Stephens, NIO }

NORTHERN IRELAND: NSC

1. I accompanied the visiting UUP delegation (minus Willie Ross MP) to the NSC on Saturday for a wash-up session with Nancy Soderberg and tour of the White House. Tony Lake looked in briefly after a morning with Aristide, which he said had gone well - over the psychological hump, well past the hand-holding stage, etc.

UUP

2. The visitors said they had been pleased by their reception in Washington. They hoped they had been able to get across the message that the Prime Minister was right to proceed cautiously, without implying that the Unionists were dragging their heels. Soderberg said she had found the visit useful. She hoped Jim Molyneaux would also come soon: the best time would be after the APEC summit in Indonesia (11-16 November) and before the Summit of the Americas in Miami in mid-December. She had in mind a call at the White House a la John Hume - a meeting with Gore and a drop-in by the President. She asked the UUP to consider putting together a group of senior businessmen to accompany Molyneaux. Perhaps Hume and Molyneaux could be joint leaders, with business leaders drawn from both communities? (This linked up with a discussion of how best to take forward the US economic assistance proposal, recorded separately.)

IRA/GERRY ADAMS

3. Soderberg asked what the Unionists thought the IRA were up to, and how the Administration should handle Adams. Maginnis said Adams was on a short leash, and was dispensable. That was why neither McGuinness nor McLoughlin had come to the US with him. He had not sold the ceasefire to the hard men of e.g. South Armagh as a permanent end to violence. They saw it rather as a chance to rebuild the IRA's political base after a series of reverses. Meanwhile, they would adopt a strategy of civil disobedience and confrontation, as a means of keeping up the pressure on HMG. The IRA enjoyed very limited support. Adams was no Arafat or Mandela. The Americans should be wary of any suggestion of a grand nationalist alliance embracing Sinn Fein, the SDLP, and the Irish Government.

4. I summarised Adams' recent remarks about the referendum and the Unionist "veto". I said it was very important for the future of the peace process that he was pressed during his visit on both permanence and the principle of consent. The visitors agreed.

Soderberg said the White House could probably help. They were already pressing Adams to make a forthcoming statement while in the US. The White House's objective was to keep him moving forward, while making it increasingly difficult for the IRA to go back to violence. I said this underlined the logic of not doing Adams too many favours at the present time. (Soderberg told me separately that the White House was coming under heavy pressure to let Adams meet Lake. This would not happen. As we knew, she would bump into him at a social function, and Adams would be seen only at office director level in State.)

DUP

5. Soderberg asked the UUP about Paisley's visit in late October. They said it was important not to humiliate him any further: Paisley the martyr could attract a lot of sympathy. He had foolishly refused to grasp the lifeline the Prime Minister had thrown him in the form of his promise to hold a referendum. But he needed to be kept in play. The UUP recommended treating Paisley as before: nothing at the White House and a call at junior level at State Department. Soderberg took note, adding that she stood ready to take a tougher line if people felt that would be appropriate.

UVF/UFF

6. Soderberg said she had also been wondering about reaching out to the Protestant paramilitaries. Trimble said it was important for there to be some contact. He would like to see the British Government do more in this area (Maginnis was less sure). There were signs that some of the organisations were close to giving up violence, but were hoping to go out with a bang. The time was not yet right to invite them to the US. Soderberg said the Administration was ready to help in the way it had tried to with the IRA.

7. As we left, Soderberg told me she was sorry the White House had not been able to meet all of our concerns over the Adams visit. I explained the political sensitivities in the UK, the fragility of the peace process, and the ease with which it could be derailed. Soderberg said she was beginning to understand. There were political pressures in the US too. They had tried to strike a balance, and would continue to be as even-handed as possible. The UUP visit had been helpful. Molyneux should come too: the sooner the better.

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