

CONFIDENTIAL

504/94

FROM: M J WILLIAMS
US(POL)

31 January 1995

*My brother
Mr Conroy has
responded with
the
10/2*
the case
any progress on it?
AI
B...

ASST./
SEC
70/2
- 3 FEB 1995
C.C.R.U.

1/12
the case
M. deal with X.
2. back to me for R.D.M.
31.

- cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
- PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Shannon - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Mr Brooker - B
- Mr White - B
- Mrs Brown - B
- Mr Perry - B
- Mr Marsh - B
- Mrs Collins - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Smyth - B
- Mr Lamont RID - B
- HMA Dublin - B

UNDER/
SEC
1118/1
31 JAN 1995
CENT SEC

Mr Thomas (L&B) - B

IRISH GOVERNMENT MEETING WITH SINN FEIN

Yesterday I asked Mr O'Donovan for a read-out on the outcome of the meeting between the Irish Government and Mr Adams on Friday 27 January. He telephoned me at home later in the evening to give me some particulars as follows.

2. According to Mr O'Donovan, the Taoiseach and the Tanaiste both emphasised to Mr Adams the need for Sinn Fein to work seriously through the British five point agenda in Exploratory Dialogue, to enable matters to move on to the next phase, ie involvement of Ministers. I expressed appreciation for their having taken this line with him.

3. Mr Adams asked about the Joint Framework Document. Irish Ministers stressed that the negotiations with HMG were not yet completed, and were confidential. Mr Adams was given a very general outline by officials, who pointed out the status of the JFD as a paper for discussion by the parties, but with no details about its content.

4. Mr Adams placed a strong emphasis on the question of PIRA

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prisoners, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland (apparently he did not mention IRA prisoners in GB). Mr Adams sought commitments from the Irish Government on particular prisoners within the Republic, but the Government refused to give any commitments. It emphasised that the case of each one would be considered individually. (Mr O'Donovan added that the newspaper reports yesterday about the likely release of some further IRA prisoners from within the Republic took Maryfield by surprise, and they were trying to find out the substance behind them.)

5. Mr Adams referred to the Meanscoil. He said Sinn Fein's own reaction to the reports they had received about the recent meeting between the Meanscoil and the Secretary of State was one of appreciation that HMG was making an effort to help the school. However Mr Adams's view was that this gesture came too late to help Sinn Fein, although not too late to be of assistance to the Meanscoil itself. (I refrained from commenting.) More generally regarding the use of the Irish language, the Irish side were puzzled by an allegation by Mr Adams that the use of Irish in addresses in Northern Ireland was still illegal. I questioned this. As the Irish side knew, we had introduced legislation to allow local councils to give streets names in Irish (or other languages) as well as English, although I did not think this had yet become law. In the meantime, it was the clear policy of the Post Office to try to deliver mail if at all possible, irrespective of how they were addressed; I was sure they would generally succeed in delivering letters addressed in Irish. (I should be grateful if Central Secretariat could confirm what the actual situation is, so that I can go back to Mr O'Donovan on this.)

6. There was some discussion of policing. Mr Adams continued to take the line that the RUC was unacceptable to nationalists. The Irish side challenged him on the statement which he was reported to have made recently at the Dunlewey Centre, that cases of child abuse should not be reported to the police. Mr Adams apparently was a little uncomfortable, but said that there were perfectly good statutory bodies concerned with child welfare which should be able

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to handle such cases. Mr O'Donovan commented that this was not a satisfactory response.

7. The Tanaiste raised the question of punishment beatings, which he said should be stopped. Mr Adams said that this was a "difficult issue", but he believed that they were making progress. He said that there had been no organised beatings in West Belfast since September; if there had been any cases of beatings, these were simply local impromptu reactions to misdemeanours, eg car stealing, and had not been arranged deliberately.

8. There was a full discussion on the question of weapons. Mr Adams showed "strong" acceptance that they were part of the problem all round, and must be dealt with. Mr O'Donovan understood that Adams had fully accepted that Sinn Fein had a role, but was not very clear about how it would happen. Apparently Mr Adams said that there was "no way" of his successfully approaching the people concerned on this issue at present, as he would be fiercely rebuffed. Progress would depend upon the mood changing, which Mr O'Donovan said led straight back to the first point, that progress in XD and the possibility of Sinn Fein meeting Ministers depended upon their approach to Exploratory Dialogue, and could in turn lead to the better mood which might make it easier for the weapons issue to be addressed in substance. Mr Adams did not want the issue to be given a high profile at present, because he felt that he could not do anything about it now.

8. Overall, it appears to have been a business-like and serious meeting, with straight talking on both sides.

[signed MJW]

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