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1. cc [unclear] home (dy)

Mr Mayhew

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2. Mr Cuthbert.

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**Sinn Féin Press Statement
For Immediate Release
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Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams speaking today at the Washington Press Club expressed the hope that "the Washington Economic Conference will further consolidate the peace process and move us quickly toward all-party talks which are the essential next step for a negotiated peace settlement".

Mr Adams said:

"Firstly, can I say I am pleased to be back in Washington.

The economic conference which is being hosted by President Clinton is evidence of this administrations continued positive engagement with the peace process.

I commend President Clinton for his even handed approach and his open door policy to the peace process and this conference.

Significantly, and for the first time ever all of the main players, the Dublin and London governments, the unionists, the smaller loyalist parties, the SDLP and Sinn Féin are for the first time, together under the one roof.

It is a unique opportunity which should not be squandered.

I welcome Mr Mayhew's request for a meeting. There is widespread agreement that the peace process must be inclusive and I look forward to a discussion which will have substance as well as symbolism.

I am an Irish Republican and I seek a British disengagement from my country. Mr Mayhew represents a different point of view.

We each need to approach this first meeting with a generosity of spirit, recognizing it as part of a process of inclusive dialogue which will ensure that we succeed in moving the peace process forward to real peace talks involving all of the parties led by both governments.

I echo the British view expressed in their opening statement to Sinn Féin at our first meeting on December 9th when it said that the fundamental issues **'can be most satisfactorily addressed and resolved through inclusive political negotiations addressing a broad agenda across all the relevant relationships with no issue excluded and no outcome predetermined'**.

I welcome the fact that both unionist parties and the smaller loyalist parties are present and I would hope that they too would avail of the opportunity this conference presents to open a dialogue with Irish republicans.

I regret the decision of the two unionist leaders, Jim Molyneaux and Ian Paisley to stay away. Their constituents deserve better than that. They need to provide leadership at this historic point in our history.

The Washington Conference

Sinn Féin welcomes the Washington Trade and Investment Conference in Ireland and the opportunities it raises for the US government and private industry to make a real contribution to the regeneration of the Irish economy.

Sinn Féin believes that any new investment, development or funding must be used for the benefit of those most directly affected by the conflict and by partition.

The Objectives of Economic Policy .

Sinn Féin's economic policy has three objectives ;

to provide sustainable and dignified livelihoods for all citizens;

to develop economic resources, human and material to their fullest;

and to create an economy which reflects the social and cultural values of all the Irish people and which fulfills their material needs and aspirations.

Sinn Féin's vision is of a society which grants economic justice to all its people.

Everyone, Irrespective of their background should be able to gain meaningful well paid long-term employment in jobs that provide genuine security and fair working conditions. Everyone should have a meaningful role to play in developing the economy, particularly at a local level.

A partitioned Irish economy does not and cannot provide for the achievement of these goals.

Even the most conservative Irish business elements are moving towards the model of a single island economy. This is particularly relevant in the context of the European Union.

Discrimination In Employment

For example, the basic demand of an end to discrimination in employment as not been achieved, and this despite 23 years of direct British control

In 1969 the then British Prime Minister Harold Wilson promised that; *'Every citizen of Northern Ireland is entitled to the same equality of treatment and freedom from discrimination.'*

Today, over 20 years after the first British anti-discrimination law, catholics in the six counties are still 2.2 times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants.

The British government admitted in 1992 that *'on all major social and economic indicators catholics are worse of than protestants.'*

A 1994 Family Expenditure Survey showed that average gross weekly income for protestants was 17% more than the average income for catholic households. Last year also saw record payouts in compensation to catholics in fair employment cases taken against state health boards, local councils and the Queens University in Belfast.

Several weeks ago an Equal Opportunities Report also confirmed the high level of discrimination against catholic women. There are more catholic women in the lowest earning bands, which holds true for both full-time and part-time.

Sinn Féin sees the need for clear and comprehensive legal powers to eradicate discrimination and to ensure that equality is realized. Equality is the key word here. Sinn Féin does not want jobs taken off protestants to be given to catholics. We want equality of treatment for all our people. We support the MacBride Principles and support affirmative action as the key to redressing the imbalance in the workforce with a timetable for eradicating the imbalance in employment ratios.

However, discrimination in employment is only one of the economic problems which confronts the Irish people. Problems such as urban deprivation, endemic long term unemployment and the marginalisation of rural and border areas are all factors to be resolved. Foremost among these is the issue of emigration which is affected by all of these detrimental influences.

An average of around 7,000 people emigrated each year from the six counties over the past two decades. In the border counties the relative loss of population has been even higher. In the 26 counties over 250,000 emigrated during the 1980's.

Investing In Peace and Democracy

Sinn Féin believes that the resolution of these problems and the achievement of our economic objectives can be realized through the creation of a democratic all-Ireland economy.

This would involve the transformation of the war economy of the six counties into a productive and developed peace time economy. It would mean the elimination of the economic distortions created by partition with the social and economic harmonization of regions and social groups in Ireland with the introduction and promotion of genuine economic democracy and the targeting of resources at those areas of greatest need.

Economic and social regeneration of deprived areas requires;

- > the development of indigenous Irish manufacturing industry.
- > the promotion of inward investment so that it links in a positive way with indigenous Irish industry, contributes and remains accountable to the local communities and meets the needs of the wider economy.
- > a commitment to education and training for all people and at all stages of personal development; and
- > investment in research and development and the promotion of high technology, in new products and new processes and in existing industries such as food processing, textiles and clothing as well as new high technology industries.

If this strategy is to be effective, then it needs to be set in the context of a series of underlying principles involving;

- > the need for well paid, high skilled and sustainable employment.
- > a commitment to and investment in the social infrastructure.
- > the absolute necessity of viewing economic development in the wider context of social, political, cultural and environmental priorities; and
- > the requirement to instigate full parity of esteem and equality of treatment for nationalists.

The USA Role

Sinn Féin wants to see the building of a new, prosperous and dynamic 32 county Ireland that takes us away from partition, division, domination, discrimination, disadvantage, economic failure and injustice.

We want to see genuine participation and equality at all levels of the economy and society with justice for all irrespective of religion, political opinion, gender, sexuality, disability age or ethnic origin.

Sinn Féin believes that the USA has a role to play in supporting the political, economic and social development of the island. The historical affinities of the past between Ireland and the USA can be built upon.

This can help to ensure that US investment and other forms of US economic aid meet the agreed needs of Irish economic and social development and are of benefit to all the people of Ireland.

**Extracts from Gerry Adams Press Conference at the National Press Center,
Washington on 23 May 1995**

Question

How significant, or symbolic if you like, would a handshake meeting with Sir Patrick Mayhew be, given that these are not [unclear] talks?

Answer

Well, we desire substance as well as symbolism but I think that Patrick Mayhew is doing the right thing. My office has been in contact both with his people at Stormont and Maria King, who heads our Mission here in Washington, has been in contact with Stormont also, seeking to arrange as substantive a meeting as possible. As I said before, I think we come at this from different positions - I wanting to end British rule in my country, he with his pro-union view - we both have leadership roles to play. I think it is very important that we do that to the best of our ability and that we seek to, in many ways as the conference does, to invest in the progress which has been made so far.

Question

Mr Adams, what would you consider to be success on a substantive level from your conversations with Mr Mayhew?

Answer

That we move it on. That we do the meeting and that I leave the meeting, and that he leaves the meeting, with a sense of assurance, with a sense of each other's commitment, with a sense of the opportunity which we now have.

Question

What precise substance do you expect from that meeting? You said you wanted substance rather than symbolism. What do you want to say to him?

Answer

It was almost ten years, in fact it is slightly over ten years since the British imposed the ban on ministerial contact with Sinn Fein. That had the effect of placing Sinn Fein voters in a second-class position so we do want, on behalf of our voters, assurances from the British, practical demonstrations from the British, that they recognise the rights of all citizens to be treated as first-class. Secondly we, as a republican party, as an Irish republican party, want to see the end of British rule in our country and we accept that others have a different view. But everyone accepts the need for change, for fundamental, political and constitutional change and I will make that point. There is a need also for a total demilitarisation of the situation. I note that the PTA, which is the most repressive piece of legislation in Western Europe, was re-imposed just in the last week. I will make that point. The issue of the prisoners. There has to be a release of all the prisoners as part of the evolving peace process. I will make that point. And there also needs to be a total democratisation of the situation and I will make that point. But the meeting has to be about me listening as well as talking and I would like to see it as part of what would be the first in a series of such engagements.