

To: Mr D E S Blatherwick
Date: 17 January 1995

To: Mr Q Thomas

cc: PS/SofS (L&B)
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Legge
Mr Bell
Mr Williams
Mr Watkins
Mr Stephens
Mrs Collins
Mr Brooker
Mr Maccabe
Mr Leach

Mrs Sear, SIL
Mr Lamont, RID

ASST MM 441/1
SEC 17 JAN 1995
CENT C

ASST 03821
SEC 19 JAN 1995
CENT SEC

Mr Watkins
John Dew advised me
that no briefing was
required. LD 18/1

Mrs Kenny
PIA S02/1
LD 20/1

LD 18/1
Mrs Doyle
for action
18/1

Mr. ask if the Embassy
want any hfy. on + (Eu
package, PE, left wing etc).

17/1

FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

1. The Chairperson of the Forum, Judge McGuinness, has invited me to attend the public session of the Forum on Friday 20 January, and to lunch. Business that day is on the theme of "Participation in Social and Economic Reconstruction - Sharing the Peace Dividend".

2. I am faxing the programme to you separately. The first session, presentations from voluntary and community sectors, is chaired by Maureen Gaffney, a respectable Irish psychologist, with panelists from Northern Ireland voluntary organisations including eg Quentin Oliver. The second is by women's organisations. The third, entitled "Exploring the Perspective of Victims of Violence" is to be chaired by Oliver Wilkinson of Victim Support Northern Ireland and includes Tony Doherty of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign. The session after lunch concerns former prisoners and the panel includes Pat McGeown, Sinn Fein spokesperson on prisoners issues.

2. I am inclined to accept for lunch and the third session of the morning and to send someone from the Embassy to the other three sessions. Unless I hear to the contrary by close of play, I will act accordingly. I will of course check with the Secretariat that arrangements would be as when I attended the Forum before: ie, the risks of bumping into Sinn Fein will be minimalised and I will sit among the audience, not as a "participant". I expect no problems over any of this.

3. I understand that Jim Daniell has had a similar invitation. I would see no problem in his attending sessions of the Forum under similar conditions.

(Signed)
D E S Blatherwick
AMBASSADOR

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ASST mm 590/1
SEC 20 JAN 1995
CENT

FROM: P N BELL, AUS(L)
18 January 1995

Mr Daniell

C

ASST 60 477/1
SEC 23 JAN 1995
CENT SEC

- cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
- PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
- PS/Sir J Wheeler (L&B)
- PS/PUS (L&B)
- PS/Mr Fell
- Mr Legge
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Leach
- Mr Warne, Home Office
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Williams
- Mr Wood (L&B)
- Mr Brooker
- Mrs Collins
- Mr Currie
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Stephens
- Mrs Sear
- HMA Dublin
- Mr Lamont, RID

(610/1)

19

1. to be handled
2. to be done

Mrs Kenny
Mrs Taylor
LD 23/1

FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Thank you for your minute recording your invitation to attend the Dublin Forum on Friday. Subject to the views of others, including Ministers - though I gather than Sir J Wheeler has indicated he is content, the main consideration as it strikes us here is whether you think attending the Forum would be of value from the Criminal Justice perspective. If you do - and you do - then I would certainly not wish to dissuade you. Nor would I let the prospect of meeting hobgoblins, disguised as Sinn Féin representatives, deter you either. The organisers would, I believe, seek to protect you as far as possible anyway; you are, moreover, more than capable of dealing politely and rationally with any points they might direct at you where it was appropriate to do so; you will be a spectator, at least in plenary sessions not a participant.

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2. Indeed, if anything, I see positive advantage on political grounds in your attending. We wish the Forum well; we do not want to do anything that could, once again, be misconstrued as a snub; nor do we want to give the mistaken impression that the NIO is not keenly interested in issues on the agenda on Friday.

3. In short, I endorse your basic instinct to go. But similar considerations do not, it seems to me, apply to the Home Office, who have also been invited to attend Friday's session. They obviously share an interest in the subject matter. But the writ of that Department does not run in Northern Ireland, and I greatly doubt whether they wish to expose themselves at first hand either to Irish politics generally, or to the kind of specific England and Wales prison issues about which the Irish are currently badgering us. My advice to them would be, politely, to decline the invitation.

(Signed PNB)

P N BELL
OAB 6469

PS. I now see Mr Thomas has given you essentially the same advice.

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