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FROM: D FELL
2 FEBRUARY 1995

- cc PS/Sir John Wheeler (DFP,B&L) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (DENI,B&L) - B
- PS/Baroness Denton (DANI,DED&L) - B
- PS/Mr Moss (DOE,DHSS&L) - B
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- NI Permanent Secretaries
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Wood (B&L) - B
- Mr Maxwell - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Mr Lamont, (RID, FCO) - B
- Mr Westmacott, HME, Washington
- HMA, Dublin - B
- Mr Alexander, NIB
- Mrs McAuley

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L) - B

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. The purpose of this submission is to provide a progress report on our planning for the White House Trade and Investment Conference to be held in Washington in May of this year.

DATE/VENUE

2. The Conference is now scheduled for 24-26 May 1995 in Washington; the Sheraton Hotel will be the venue. The Conference will begin on the evening of 24 May with a dinner/reception hosted by either Senator Mitchell, or President Clinton. The President will address the Conference

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on the morning of 25 May, and the proceedings will end at lunchtime on 26 May.

FOCUS/STRUCTURE

3. NI officials have been discussing the themes of the Conference with Mr Charles Meissner (Assistant Secretary, US Department of Commerce). The US Department of Commerce believe that the Conference should be primarily economic, although they realise that there will inevitably be a significant political involvement, given President Clinton's attendance. The Conference structure will follow that established at the Cleveland Conference on Trade and investment in Central and Eastern Europe held ~~on~~ 12/13 January, ie plenary sessions covering the investment opportunity supplemented by 'break-out' sessions covering topics such as technology, training, tourism, fair employment, urban regeneration, infrastructure community and labour issues. The break-out sessions will be chaired by Americans, but may also have Northern Ireland speakers.

4. From the NI standpoint, we believe the overarching aim should be to portray the Washington Conference as yet another constructive element in the developing peace process, which will promote a positive image of Northern Ireland. Within that broad objective we have a number of economic objectives, viz:
 - (i) to cultivate relationships with those industrialists who are, or are likely to be, interested in investment in Northern Ireland; and
 - (ii) to develop trade relationships between US and NI businesses.

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There will also be secondary objectives relating to tourism, technology exchange and training opportunities. We intend to have a 'pavilion', or set of rooms, where Ministers and others can entertain invited guests to discuss business opportunities in Northern Ireland.

5. The Americans aim to produce a background paper for the Conference which will cover economic development strategies in the 12 'Northern' counties of Ireland, ie the 6 Northern Ireland counties and the 6 'border' counties of the ROI and outline how the US 'fits in' with these strategies. NI officials are preparing background material which will be of use to the Americans. It is possible that groups such as the CBI, IBEC and perhaps Trade Unions will also be asked to provide papers for the Conference.
6. It is currently expected that the Conference will be followed up by trade shows/events in the US for Northern Ireland firms, and in NI/ROI for American firms.

FUNDING

7. The Americans are aiming for a self-financing Conference, and all attendees will be charged a \$650 entry fee. This may be reduced by up to half for smaller companies, or non-governmental bodies. The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) may be used as a last resort by the Americans if there is a shortfall in funding.

INVITATIONS/ATTENDANCE

8. The Americans envisage participation of around 1,000 and to achieve this they will issue approximately 1,700 invitations. They have asked us to consider a list of business and non-business invitees of up to 300. We

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understand that similar numbers are being sought from the ROI. Ministerial, 'political' and official attendees will be in addition to these. It is thought likely that there will be District Council representation from both sides of the border (who will be expected to fund their own costs). NI officials will be keeping in close touch with District Councils on this issue.

9. The Americans are also likely to invite all 17 NI MPs and leaders of political parties; an invitation will inevitably be extended to Mr Adams. We will obviously need to watch this in the light of developments in XD.
10. The current planning assumption is that the Secretary of State will attend the Conference, accompanied by Mr Michael Ancram and Baroness Denton. On the Irish side, the Tanaiste is likely to attend along with at least one other Minister. On present indications it is not expected that the Taoiseach will attend, although the position on this may change.

IRISH APPROACH TO THE CONFERENCE

11. NI officials have met officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of Enterprise and Employment and the Industrial Development Authority in the ROI. The DFA are currently the lead Department in organising the Conference arrangements from the Irish side. **We will** endeavour to co-operate as much as possible with the Irish in making the arrangements for the Conference.

MEDIA

12. The co-ordinating group is currently drawing up a media handling plan for the Conference.

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SENATOR MITCHELL'S VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND

13. Senator Mitchell will be visiting Northern Ireland from 14-16 February. He will meet the Prime Minister on 14 February (5.15 pm) in London, and so will not now be available for dinner in Northern Ireland on that evening. A separate note on this has gone forward to the Secretary of State.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

14. In my 5 January submission, I indicated that a progress report would be made at the end of January, the end of February and weekly thereafter. Given the postponement of the Conference to almost the end of May, I would suggest that the next progress reports should be submitted at the end of February and the end of March, with weekly reports thereafter.
15. The Secretary of State is invited to note progress on the planning of the Washington Trade and Investment Conference in May 1995.

DAVID FELL

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