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277/94

From: D E S Blatherwick
Date: 5 January 1994

To: Mr D Lamont, RID

cc: PS/SofS (L&B)
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Legge
Mr Bell
Mr Williams
Mr Watkins
Mr Stephens
Mrs Collins
Mr Brooker
Mr Maccabe (PAB)
[REDACTED]
Ms Sear, SIL
Mr J Greenstock, Washington - by fax

ASST HM 116/1
SEC 10 JAN 1995
CENT SEC

Mrs Kennedy
Mrs Doyle 10/9/1

ASST 10 110/1
SEC 20 JAN 1995
CENT SEC

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SEAN DONLON

1. You will have seen press reports to the effect that Sean Donlon has been invited to take on Martin Mansergh's role as Adviser on Northern Ireland affairs to the new Government, working from the Taoiseach's office. Donlon has confirmed that he is considering the offer, and will make up his mind over the weekend.
2. Donlon headed the Anglo-Irish Division in the DFA from 1972. He was Irish Ambassador in Washington between 1978 and 1981 and Secretary of the DFA from then until 1987. He has since been working for Tony Ryan's aircraft leasing business, based in Shannon.
3. Donlon is credited with turning the Irish-American lobby against PIRA during his time in Washington, and with building up support for the Irish position on the Hill. He was a protege of Garrett FitzGerald and one of the architects of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement. He left the DFA partly because Fianna Fail distrusted him, partly because he distrusted Fianna Fail but mainly because he had had enough and was bored. Fine Gael sought to interest him in taking a role in the party last year: he declined because (he told me) he had had enough of politics.
4. I have known Donlon on and off over the last 20 years. He is clever, well informed and a very good operator. He also makes enemies; and one or two remarks dropped by DFA officials over recent days suggest that his return would not go down well there. I suspect Sean OhUiginn is praying hard that he will turn the offer down.

(Signed)
D E S Blatherwick
AMBASSADOR

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