

From: D E S Blatherwick  
Date: 10 January 1995

CONFIDENTIAL

277/94

To: Mr 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  
Mr Leach  
[REDACTED]  
Mrs Sear, SIC

UPPER  
SEC  
277/11  
1 JAN 1995  
Mrs Kenny  
CPS SEC

1. cc Mr Brown  
2. ~~Mr Brown~~ HD 11  
Louis for Mrs Robinson to  
accept an hon. degree due to  
Holycross has declined it,  
but I don't think there's  
anything we can do about  
it. It's tangentially useful  
anti-hacBride stuff.

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LD 203/1  
CENT

SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT

1. I called on the Secretary to the Government this morning for a general chat.

Northern Ireland

2. Murray confirmed that the Taoiseach had been very pleased with his meeting with the Prime Minister before Christmas, though no-one on the Irish side knew what had taken place during the long tete-a-tete. Sean OhUiginn had also told him that the Liaison Group on Friday had gone very well. The Irish still hoped to agree and publish a framework document by the end of January, though there was some flexibility. They had not yet given thought as to where a summit might take place. Though it was strictly Dublin's turn, they would not die in the ditch.

3. Murray said that the DFA had kept him generally informed about the exploratory discussions between HMG and Sinn Fein. The question of arms was a difficult one - though in answer to my question he had no suggestions how to resolve it. I stressed that it was a serious issue for us. We were not playing games: unless substantive movement took place, neither the main Northern Ireland

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To be sent

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parties nor HMG could contemplate admitting Sinn Fein to the talks. We looked to the Irish Government to stick firmly to the language in the Downing Street declaration and to what the Taoiseach had said in private and in public in London before Christmas. Murray indicated assent.

4. Murray said that if Sean Donlon took up the Taoiseach's offer, he would be mainly occupied as chairman of the programme managers' network - ie a sort of super Chef de Cabinet. Undoubtedly he would have an input on Northern Ireland affairs, but the media had exaggerated it. Indeed, Donlon would be pressed to deal with every-day government business. I asked who in that case would deal with Sinn Fein. Murray said that Adams had raised that point with Bruton when they first met before Christmas, and Bruton had without much thought nominated Paddy Teahon, the Secretary of the Taoiseach's Department. Teahon had had several rather routine contacts with Pat Doherty since then, but no more. He was totally new to such issues. Murray indicated that he was delighted Bruton had not thought of his name first.

The President

5. Murray said that the President proposed to visit Belfast in March to deliver a speech during a conference at QUB. They would be in touch in the usual way. The new Government had also lifted the reserve on the President accepting an honorary degree from QUB: she proposed to accept it at a ceremony probably in October.

Prince of Wales

6. I said I was still unable to take this further. Murray said not to worry, but warned that he would have to put any proposals past the new Government. I said I had expected that.

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Comment

7. As suspected, the new Government's links with Sinn Fein are markedly different, and less effective, than under the previous regime. No-one has taken over Martin Mansergh's role. Bruton, like Spring, regards Sinn Fein with great distaste and I doubt he will have much to do with them. Sinn Fein themselves are likely to shun Donlon. I doubt they will want to go through the DFA.

8. Paddy Teahon is a most unlikely choice for dealings with Sinn Fein. Though sharp he is unpolitical and likes to masquerade as a stage Kerryman. His career has centred on economic issues - the staple of his present job - and he has never worked on Northern Ireland matters.

(Signed)  
D E S Blatherwick  
AMBASSADOR

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