

Prime Minister

*Peter Carrington
will be over at
U.N. soon. I will
have a word with
him
now*

1. Herewith letter from Robert Adley about Northern Ireland, which you have seen already, together with a reply for your signature.
2. I do think that there is a strong case for a senior member of the Cabinet making a speech in the United States, or appearing on American Television in order to state with the utmost clarity and firmness, the policy of the Government towards Northern Ireland and the true nature of those who seek to replace the ballot box with the bullet and the bomb.
3. I discussed this problem frequently with Airey, who, as you know, urged a similar policy on Roy Mason.
4. The problem arises as to who best could do this. Although in a sense H.A. is the most obvious person, I do not think that he is the right one.
5. Quintin Hailsham or Peter Carrington would both do it better.
6. We both know that too much American money is still being used to finance the terrorists in Northern Ireland.

Ian Gow

13.9.79.

13th September 1979

Thank you so much for your thoughtful and constructive letter of 1st September about Northern Ireland.

I share your concern about the extent of pro-IRA propaganda in the United States and notably in New York.

I agree that there is considerable misunderstanding among the American people, and notably among the Irish community in New York about the true character of the IRA and about the principles which govern British policy towards Ulster.

I want you to know that I will consider and follow up most carefully the constructive suggestions which you have made.

Thank you again for having written, and for the kind remarks which you made about my visit to Ulster on 29th August.

I

Robert Adley Esq MP



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

This long and thoughtful letter from Robert Adley tackles the question of educating American public opinion about Irish issues.

Shall I ask the Northern Ireland Office and the Foreign Office to prepare a draft reply for you to consider?

I think (as (how))
would draft the
best reply
MAD

4 September 1979

I have ack'd MAD

1 Gow has seen



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP
10 Downing Street
London S W 1

14
1st September 1979

My Dear Margaret

Your visit to Ireland on Wednesday is enormously appreciated. If I say that your visit was an absolutely vital public relations exercise, I do not mean to diminish its importance - quite the reverse. You have often spoken to me about the importance of saying and doing the right thing at the right time and your visit was right in every way.

The purpose of this letter however is not sycophancy. We are all obviously concerned about what is happening in Northern Ireland, but I wonder if I can just put on paper a few thoughts about the effect on the situation there of what is happening in the United States. I use as my guide the experience I gained when visiting New York and Washington with Mr Wedgwood Benn in 1971. We went on a "pro-Concorde" campaign masterminded in New York, which has in some ways similarities with the anti-British campaign being waged by the Irish-American lobby in the United States.

When Tony Benn and I returned from the U.S. in 1971, I put in a recommendation that we should mount our own pro Concorde campaign* in the U.S. well prior to the introduction into commercial service of Concorde. This idea was rejected, even ridiculed, by our then Aviation Minister and I was told "do not worry, it will be alright when the 'plane goes in to service". We know what happened now - the anti-Concorde campaign, one of whose sponsors was Governor Carey, was so successful that it kept Concorde out of New York for over two years and virtually crippled the plane's commercial success. May I use this experience therefore to make a few connected comments about the current position in the propaganda battle over Northern Ireland being waged in the U.S.

/continued....

* aimed at countering a vicious anti-Concorde campaign



1. The promotion of a case or cause is handled more professionally, more skilfully and more unscrupulously in the U.S. than anywhere else.
2. The diversity of the news media - radio, press and television - who are always competing for stories, create an atmosphere for raising the temperature on specific issues, which is far more intense than anything normally experienced in Britain.
3. American politicians have long since learned to use their news media in a way which almost all British politicians shun.
4. If a rumour or story remains effectively unanswered then the general populace will believe that the rumour or story is true.
5. The ability of the American public for mass delusion, even mass hysteria, is probably unique.
6. The existence of ethnic groups is accepted as a legitimate part of the American political scene but can be counter productive to the promotion of a cause provided that it is effectively challenged.

Threading together these six points it seems to me the current espousal by the Irish-American lobby of what is virtually the IRA case is influenced in various ways by the different points that I have tried to make above. To be frank I believe that Governor Carey and some of his friends are strongly anti-British and see the Northern Irish problem as an ideal opportunity for them simultaneously to promote their political causes whilst gratifying their prejudices.

Some of the basic facts of life about Northern Ireland which we fully understand are simply not believed in the U.S. Americans do not believe that the majority of people in Northern Ireland wish to remain separated from Southern Ireland. They do not understand that the majority of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland have lived there very much longer than the majority of Americans have lived in America - and they do not even think of this because no-one puts it in their mind. No one for instance has ever suggested that the people of Puerto Rico are a population kept down by American imperialism, yet the majority of Puerto Ricans, by wishing to remain U.S. citizens, could effectively be compared with the majority of Northern Irishmen wishing to remain U.K. subjects.

I am in danger of going on too long! My point, Margaret, is that we must use every opportunity to counter the IRA's propoganda campaign in the U.S. and elsewhere. I fully accept

/continued....



and approve of the decision of Humphrey Atkins not to respond to Governor Carey's invitation. However, how about suggesting that Roy Mason goes? He is a blunt and effective spokesman and his presence would stress the bipartisan nature of the problem as far as Britain is concerned.

I have tackled Governor Carey on his home ground and came out of it quite well - in fact the New York press were very complimentary about our willingness to beard the enemy in his own lair. I do not believe we should allow his position to go unchallenged.

I realise that when you see President Carter you will make all the necessary points as effectively as anybody in the world can make them. It is not however becoming, or in any way appropriate for a British Prime Minister to indulge in the sort of political propaganda which I believe is necessary if the British case is to be brought home in any way to the American public.

Finally I apologise for dwelling in this letter on the situation in the U.S. I am bound to say that in our own country there is an increasing mood of despair about the Northern Ireland situation. Perhaps the democratic principal of one man one vote, so much espoused by American politicians, might have to be re-examined. There is no doubt that because the British troops are bearing the brunt of the aggression and playing the game by civilised rules while the IRA behave like barbarians, we appear to be coming off second best. Perhaps the answer to Governor Carey and the IRA is "one man one vote", and let the Northern Irish majority take over the responsibility for their own security and deal with it in their own fairly brutal way. This would probably leave an awful mess but might relieve Britain of much of the opprobrium.

Congratulations on all you are doing -
we watch you with great admiration and
satisfaction.

You are
WA

P.S. Sorry about
length of letter!

Papers removed from file

Date 4.9

19. Drafted
P77 Signed

ADLEY

T.P. with Ian Gow

Tessa

Is all well with this?

Jane 12/9

Adley ^{no} tmw

4 September 1979

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to acknowledge your letter of 1 September about Northern Ireland.

I will bring this to the Prime Minister's attention immediately, and you will be sent a reply as soon as possible.

MAP

Robert Adley, Esq., M.P.