

CONFIDENTIAL & PERSONAL



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BY FAX

British Embassy
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GERRY ADAMS

1. I spent an hour with Jane Holl at the NSC this afternoon.
2. I spoke in the same terms as the Ambassador had used with Tarnoff earlier in the day (reported by telegram). Holl said that it was increasingly likely that the response to Adams would be "Yes if" rather than "No because". She could assure me that we would be consulted before the Administration's position was finalised. She understood our wish that Adams should both renounce violence and commit his party to do the same. He could not do this; and the Administration did not wish to place the barrier so high that Adams would simply walk away from it. Quite apart from the missed opportunity, the President would be criticised by the Irish/American lobby for being in cahoots with the British.
3. I said that it would be extremely damaging to the peace process in Northern Ireland if the U.S. granted Adams a visa on terms which had the effect of undermining the Joint Declaration, and allowing Adams the prize of entry to this country without first renouncing violence. There would need to be continuing exchanges on language, but I hoped that Holl could agree that Adams should be required, at the very least, to endorse the Joint Declaration as the way forward and state explicitly that he no longer considered there to be any justification for Sinn Fein and the IRA to continue the armed struggle. Holl said she did not believe Adams could be expected to go that far.
4. I said that, speaking personally, I did not think we would be able to settle for less. There had to be an end to the violence. If Adams could not commit others, he had to make his own position unequivocally clear. We understood the Administration's desire to make constructive use of Adams' application, but it would be a disaster if so little was asked of him that he concluded that he could play a part in the political process on his own terms. I took the point about



domestic political pressures, but the President would be in poor shape if Adams was allowed in and then declined to condemn the violence which was all too likely to continue during his visit. Holl said it was fully understood that Adams would have to pay a price for his visa. She reiterated that the Administration's objective was to play a constructive role. She would be glad to stay in touch.

*Trans over,
Peter.*

PETER WESTMACOTT

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