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10 DOWNING STREET  
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From the Private Secretary

28 January 1994

**USA/GERRY ADAMS**

We heard this afternoon that Gerry Adams had declined to sign up to the conditions required by the US Government. Adams was seen by the US Consul General in Belfast (not Dublin as previously feared). They had a long conversation. Adams apparently said that his position in the movement would be untenable if he complied with the American request. His reasons were political, and did not relate to his attitude to terrorism. He gave an explanation in terms of IRA theology and their views on the role of the British Army in Northern Ireland etc. At the end of the conversation he and the Consul General did not pursue the question of his visa application.

The technical position is not that Adams has been denied a visa. It is that no decision has been taken to grant a waiver to the existing prohibition on his entry. The US Government are therefore not necessarily required to announce their non-decision; but given the intense press interest and their own briefing line overnight, we must assume that the State Department will put something out today. They have asked us to say nothing until they themselves have done so.

I enclose a suggested press line for responsive use only. It is clearly important on a number of counts that we should not strike a triumphalist note. The outcome will speak for itself, and there may be a certain amount of recrimination on the American side. We should not rub salt into the wounds.

This satisfactorily answers the concerns expressed in Joan MacNaughton's letter earlier today.

I am copying this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Joan MacNaughton (Home Office), and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

**RODERIC LYNE**

Jonathan Stephens, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

**DRAFT PRESS LINE**

**INVITATION TO GERRY ADAMS TO VISIT THE USA**

[For use responsively and only after the US Government have announced their decision not to waive the prohibition on Gerry Adams's entry.]

This was a decision entirely for the United States. ✓

We regret that Gerry Adams has not responded positively to the American request to him to renounce violence and declare the commitment of Sinn Fein and the IRA to end the conflict on the basis of the Joint Declaration. ✓

We welcome the strong and consistent support which the United States has given to the British and Irish Governments over the Joint Declaration. ✓

It provides a fair and balanced basis for Sinn Fein and the Provisional movement to end violence for good and adopt exclusively democratic methods. There is no reason why they should not now take this course, and it is disappointing that Gerry Adams has chosen not to do so. ✓

Was the British Government consulted?

Yes. As the State Department have indicated, the Americans sought the views of the British and Irish Governments. ✓

What views did you express?

We gave our views privately. We keep in close touch with the Administration over Northern Ireland and value the support which they have given over the Joint Declaration. ✓