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CABINET OFFICE COMCEN

Grateful if the following message could be sent on the direct link to the White House as soon as possible.

MESSAGE FOR MR ANTHONY LAKE, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, FROM RODERIC LYNE, NO 10 DOWNING STREET

Dear Tony

I am sorry that you have had to spend so much time on the Gerry Adams problem - even when you were up in Massachusetts. But it is enormously important for the future of the Joint Declaration, as you will know from our previous exchanges.

I hope that you will have received the confidential assessment which I asked to be passed to you earlier in the week. This, of course, is not information which we have been able to share with Dublin. The four IRA bombs in Oxford Street have borne out some of our concerns all too quickly.

The Prime Minister has been taking a close personal interest in the subject. He is most appreciative of the way in which you have consulted us, and feels that the proposal which your Consul-General in Belfast was instructed to put to Adams today was exactly right.

Adams has reacted exactly as I ^{feared} ~~predicted~~ in our telephone conversations - that is to say by producing weasel words to make it sound as if he is on the

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right side without, in fact, moving forward an inch. I say this not to buttress my poor reputation as a forecaster (I wish that he had come out with the commitment you requested), but because we know his style and codes from long and painful experience. He has neither renounced violence (your first condition), nor committed Sinn Fein and the IRA to end the conflict on the basis of the Joint Declaration (your second point). He has instead used honeyed words which conform with the IRA's theology that they are not the source of the violence (we are) and that they will not end their violence until we have negotiated a "peace settlement" or "a proposition" with them. To hell, therefore, with the Joint Declaration. He has said nothing here to accept the central thesis of John Major and Albert Reynolds, supported by John Hume, Cardinal Daly and thousands of democratic Irish nationalists, that the Joint Declaration itself leaves no vestige of an excuse for further violence, but is a fair and balanced basis for ending it and then entering into the democratic process.

Even at this range, I can see that Adams's cunning statement will be seductive to those who are pressing very hard on you. And it is not easy for your media, who are not steeped in nationalist code, to unravel the true meaning.

However, it seems ~~to me~~ that there is a perfectly simple test. You asked Adams to make a short and clear public statement in specific terms which you had worked out with great care. He has not done so. ~~He was given the opportunity. He, I am told, made very clear to your Consul General that he could not do as you had asked.~~ He himself has answered the question, in a way which is a disappointment to both of us.

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I trust that, however strong the pressure, there can be no question of going back on your earlier decision. What he was asked to do is on the public record. If he entered the United States without having done it, the damage would be enormous in Northern Ireland and here, and in other ways.

If there is anything we can do to help over the presentation, or in pointing out the real meaning of the Adams statement, please let me know. But I assume that what you most want from us is silence and a minimal response to any press enquiries. That is what we are doing.

When there is a moment over the next couple of weeks, I would value an opportunity to spend a few minutes on the phone on both Russia and Bosnia. You will presumably have received Yeltsin's well-crafted message to the G7, ~~(perhaps you helped to craft it)~~. The Prime Minister will be spending the day with him on 15 February, and I am sure it would be sensible to do a little coordination before we go. The Russian position on Bosnia is one concern, but far from the only one.

I hope you manage a little time off this weekend, for a change.

Best wishes,

Yours ever,

Roderic

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