

RESTRICTED

FROM: P J Westmacott  
DATE: 31 January 1994

cc: Minister  
Mr Powell  
Mr Bean  
Mr Coleman

PS

## GERRY ADAMS: REACTIONS

1. I spoke to Tafft, Parnly and Russell at the State Department last night, and to Jane Holl in the NSC.
2. Our State Department contacts were extremely disappointed by the decision to give Adams a visa. They were also scathing about the White House statement, particularly the reference to Adams "unreservedly condemning" the San Diego non-bombs (for which they have seen no collateral). Warren Christopher had nonetheless approved the text, including the reference to his position. Once the implications have sunk in, State expect the US press to "crucify" them for making policy on the basis of expediency.
3. Even the mechanics of granting Adams his visa were mishandled. Word leaked from the White House before Janet Reno had taken the decision, and before anything had been said to Adams. The 48 hour time limit for the visa also turned out to be wrong: the stamp in Adams' passport says that he must leave the US only "on the first available flight" back to Ireland. Apparently, no-one had checked the airline schedules before determining the 48 hour limit.
4. I do not know whether we will see the full transcript of the Adams/Martinez conversation on 28 January. There was clearly a significant difference between what Adams said in private and in public. When the US Consul-General first told him of the conditions, Adams apparently said: "If I give you the statement you are requesting, I shall have no future. I might as well retire to the mountains. I would have no more influence within the Republican movement". We shall indeed need to judge his public utterances by his actions!
5. Dr Holl's opening line was to enquire whether the Foreign Secretary had cancelled his visit. She had half thought he would. She was unapologetic about the decision: "Any opportunity for progress must be taken". It was inevitable that the British and US Governments took a differentiated position on this issue.

/6.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

6. Predictably, I suppose, Holl went on to say that the Adams decision could not be separated out from the more general feeling that something was fraying in the relationship between the US and the UK: CJTF, Bosnia etc. I said that we had heard all this before. Did she think the problem went much wider than the likes of Jenonne Walker? Holl claimed that she was describing a view held "much more widely and uncritically" than she would have wished. It was important to find opportunities to rebuild the relationship. This would have to be done one brick at a time. She hoped that we would take care to explain current British priorities to those in the Administration who failed to understand our move towards a "continental condominium" in Europe.

7. Tailpiece: After Martin Fletcher of The Times had rung the NSC to discuss the Adams' decision, Nancy Soderberg called the Irish Embassy and asked them to brief Fletcher "since he is interested in the background".

-11  
..

*Peter Westmacott*

Peter Westmacott

RESTRICTED