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*cc Chairperson
Secretariat*

Mr Tim O'Connor
Forum For Peace and Reconciliation
Dublin Castle
Dublin 2
Ireland

Dear Tim

The Bow Group and the Forum

As we have discussed, the Bow Group team who made a presentation to the Forum in July have pencilled in the date of 19 January for a return visit. While we have not been in a position to confirm this date, we have encouraged the representatives of the Bow Group to continue working with a view to a possible journey to Dublin in January.

Our friends from the Bow Group have taken this seriously. They have full-day meetings planned for 9 December, 18 December, and 6 January, and they have also been given a two-hour meeting with Michael Ancram of the NIO on 12 December in which it is possible that Sir Patrick Mayhew will also take part.

On foot of these preparations, the Bow Group is planning a series of speaker meetings on Northern Ireland in the new year. I understand they have already written to John Hume and David Trimble. They have also arranged a meeting with the UUP in Glengall Street on the weekend of their proposed visit to the Forum.

As in July, I would expect any views which the Bow Group puts to the Forum to take account of our own perspective on Northern Ireland. The Embassy is to meet the six-person team on the evening of 5 January and on an informal basis we have been invited to take part in their meeting the following day.

The Bow Group's Northern Ireland project has its origins in the Taoiseach's meeting with the Group last May. We would wish to give the project every encouragement. It is a promising source of progressive thinking on Northern Ireland within the ranks of the Conservatives.

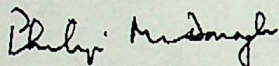
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I fully understand that the Forum's programme for early next year is under review. It would be helpful, however, for an early indication of what signal to give the Bow Group about 19 January. Ideally we would wish to be in touch with them before their meeting this Saturday 9 December.

As I mentioned, I will shortly be going on leave. In my absence you may wish to be in touch with Colin Wrafter or Helen Blake.

Wish best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Philip McDonagh
Counsellor

cc Colm O'Flóinn, Department of Foreign Affairs