

C O N F I D E N T I A L

PUS/23  
22 AUG 1991  
N.I.O. LONDON

PAB/7340/WKL/RN

FROM: W K LINDSAY, PAB  
DATE: 22 AUGUST 1991

NOTE FOR INFORMATION

cc *Mu*  
22/ PS/PUS (B&L) - B  
PS/Mr Fell - B  
Mr Ledlie - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Alston - B  
Mr Wilson - B\*  
Mr Hill - B\*  
Mr Petch - B\*  
Mr McNeill  
Mr Dodds - B  
(\*with copies of documents)

*WKL*

CONTACT WITH SINN FEIN

I briefed Senator Bill Owens (Republican - Colorado State Senate) last week. He was on an FCO-sponsored visit to the UK to familiarise himself with recent political and economic developments in the UK and Europe. He has visited the Soviet Union on a number of occasions and was appointed by President Reagan to a White House Commission on Education from 1987-91. In relation to Northern Ireland he was well read and explained he has been involved in having McBride legislation voted down in Colorado.

2. In the course of my briefing with Senator Owens it transpired that he was to see a representative of Sinn Fein the following day and he kindly offered to de-brief me on that particular aspect of his visit. In the event Senator Owens gave me a very graphic description of his visit to the Sinn Fein press centre on the Falls Road saying that it was like stepping back in time to his student days in terms of the run down condition of the place, the untidy appearance of the people who worked there together with walls covered in posters about Nicaragua, internment and plastic bullets.

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3. He met Tom Hartley, who said that he was 46 years old and Chairperson of Sinn Fein. When asked by Senator Owens about political "heroes" Hartley mentioned Martin Luther King and referred to the songs of Paul Robeson, an American singer and member of the communist party. Senator Owens said that a clear Marxist message came across in the conversation and when challenged that this was perhaps an out of date message Hartley said that there was an inevitability about victory for them and history would prove them right.

4. When asked about Gerry Adams recent comments in relation to holding out the hand of friendship to their protestant brothers and sisters, Hartley said that this was nothing new and they would be happy to have the support of unionists but on their (Sinn Fein) terms ie in a 32 county context. Hartley apparently condemned violence in general terms but went on to say that he was not going to condemn the IRA because enough people were already doing that. Senator Owens thought that on a few occasions he spoke in terms of "we" meaning the IRA and Sinn Fein together. Being a Catholic the Senator was interested that at no stage did Hartley mention the church and he (the Senator) omitted to ask him what Sinn Fein's attitude was to Cardinal Daly's regular condemnation of the violence of the IRA.

5. From comments he made it is clear that the Senator found the experience of meeting Sinn Fein quite depressing, but no less he said than a subsequent briefing which he had from Rev Martin Smyth which he described as high on detail but low on fact, humourless and very historical.

6. Hartley gave the Senator a number of booklets and leaflets which he has passed on to me (copies attached - not to all). These include:-

- (a) The Directory of Discrimination 1991 which was quoted in the campaign against the Northern Bank. Launched recently.

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- (b) The August 1990 Edition of Iris, the republican magazine with features on the border road closures, extradition, a review of IRA operations and a viewpoint on the Talks.
- (c) A Scenario for Peace - the Sinn Fein discussion document.
- (d) Ireland Information Fact File No 3 which is a pure propaganda booklet for international consumption - much of the content quite dated.
- (e) Without Consent - Britain's abuse of human rights in Ireland written by the Troops Out Movement
- (f) Discrimination in Employment in the North of Ireland by the Irish Social and Economic Research Unit
- (g) Ireland International News briefing No 22 and 23 dated May and July 1991. These comprise a collection of articles from a range of sources, including An Phoblacht.

[Signed R Neill for WKL]

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or removed etc - please distribute to London colleagues

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