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Folder Title:

[Ireland-London Bomb, February 9, 1996] [Loose]

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. notes	re: [Soderberg Notes from February 1996 Meeting] (8 pages)	02/17/1996	P1/b(1) KBH 6/14/2023
002. telcon	re: Telephone Conversation with POTUS and PM John Major (3 pages)	02/09/1996	P1/b(1) KBH 6/14/2023
003. telcon	re: Telephone Conversation with POTUS and PM John Bruton (2 pages)	02/09/1996	P1/b(1) KBH 6/14/2023

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
National Security Council
Staff Director (Nancy Soderberg)
OA/Box Number: 1397

FOLDER TITLE:

[Ireland-London Bomb, February 9, 1996] [loose]

2011-0355-F

rs1680

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

2/17 Adams/TZ 815am → 845

Americans was asked @ SF in election process.

Convincing SF excluded from elections or sign some pledge re: details of Mitchell report or consent clause.

Good meeting w/ Irish, spelt out package, meeting Home this afternoon

Dublin was trying to get us + UK support prox talks, election going into negotiations

• Their vision of election one that led quickly + directly into talks

Dublin - right - only reason for elections etc
Unionists want them + back unionists into talks + put British in position of having to make them happen

Haven't heard T. Mills talk @ negotiations guarantees a key need to be public + clearly stated. Obviously, I presume if you/we get over all difficulties - is clearer have to persuade UK on clearer

• Hope negotiations, will get clearer. Some go on

will talk to John

If situation had remained as placed, 1st
scenario not disadvantageous - US on moral
high ground, Chinese tail wagging dog

RJ - pursue decision idea + define it in a way

- SF would have been in position of leader
Br + UN

- end of ceasefire → urgency in putting package
together, don't have luxury of moral high
ground.

- If have package, huge, huge difficulty
in persuading ICA to stop if have
assurances negotiation will start

Don't know if can get back of Chinese

'8 months have s'd people's perceptions.

in most have govt + rest, here have so many
diff elements, armed faction

NO: ICA - only thing I can do is pursue option

if trying to get a package together + try to
persuade IKA to swallow. Even if not,
still need to get IKA to clarify

It's every time bomb, price goes up + I'm not

H-I don't have any control. bombs going away
at 10:00 - not attacking me.

Just try + get back on course by dint of
leadership + personality + what is being
given up re US, US. Military campaign in
won't have tolerance - some row ble of how
bits landed it.

At that pt I have to make a very personal
decision, if I fail, I have to tell you.

It will all have choices.

A - can't be waiting for next bomb, if I can't
get back on board, we may have to put it
which I don't want + I have personal
choices

Davidson + IKA people - Summit is a date @ which
these things have to be judged.

4
I accept your need to take pragmatic judgment /
hope nothing else happens

R- when talk to John, combine referendum + elective process
idea.

A- No one quite understands referendum idea

R- hope John doesn't get so hard on that Laissez
faire -

A- referendum has no effect on process, I want to
R - unless it brings him in,

A - everyone would vote for non-violence then go on beating
them over. If IRA committed to violence, will go on
could say 90% - very few who pursue war is in
language of reluctant involvement

Unwants ruled out entirely. Some merits for Govt
R - Not saying a good idea - but if it's John's price.

A - I'm keen to work out of John's initial demands
+ then seek to sell it to IRA. Package will be complicated
with elections. → But give them an offer they can't refuse
give them a negotiation + they have to stop.

While this very high desk

R - has to be a package sold to the 2 sides as in Belfast
chicken + egg. Strong impression what have talks, equal or
unless there are ~~talk~~ ceasefire. Have said will lead to talks
+ IRA will cease. If hadn't been for devices, could
have been otherwise. IRA ~~for~~

A I/A gave plenty of times. Stillness that Dublin
can hardly argue for inclusion when excluding

Why Hume opposed to elections - if no support in broad
Catholic country but of 30 yrs of deplorable use of
power if church keep to County power with
become a shattering match

Spring made good speech ^{needed us} why[^] elections

Need Guarantee, certification of 2 gifts to start
~~election~~ negotiation

R after elections

A People jumped into twin track, Mitchell report

R we can help playing a role in helping them guarantee
will be thinking of you

A- you should pray

R if you can use some Protestant prayers

A- clergy - we need more than the holy spirit
will call late Monday evening after Dublin

6

Peter King - Howell

"Criminally Howell / SP want to reinstate ceasefire
realize realize have to accept elections post bomb
Need date for ~~the~~ negotiations.

show real all party talks w/out wyle room for

BRT

- undercut ~~prob~~ Adams on UN.
- as far as getting ceasefire, grand gesture
is. Mitchell going over - temporary ceasefire

Some fatalistic.

72104

code 1743

TL - Adams, Trimble, Home, Crowe, Jean
Majn, Irish govts.

Adams Call

- shortly before
- sympathy for victims.

Deeply shocked, saddened
POTUS stmt.

underscore need to ensure process not derailed
R spoken doing what we can.
POTUS to call Majn.

Terrorist incidents in ME
enemies.

Need

Total Surplus

830 am cast meeting.

McGinniss was told last weekend
this would happen, thought he'd
stopped it.

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Clinton
Prime Minister Major

LOCATION: Residence

NOTETAKERS: Daniel Flessas, Kathi Guekel, Deuce Martinez and Katherine O'Loughlin

DATE/TIME: 9 February 1996, 1813-1823 EST

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526
2011-0355-F (3.23)
KBH 4/11/2023

President Clinton: John?

Prime Minister Major: Hi Bill.

President Clinton: I'm really sorry man.

Prime Minister Major: It's bad news, really bad news. Not just the event; it's difficult to see where you put the train on the tracks.

President Clinton: Well, it's hard to explain. I had no inclination of it.

Prime Minister Major: Nor we.

President Clinton: Adams was here and Dick Spring was here yesterday. I talked to them and I didn't see it coming. I feel badly. He was grousing around and I told him that he could say what he wanted to say about what John Major said, but the fact remains he found a way to at least offer you an alternative...possible permutations of the election proposal.

Prime Minister Major: What was frustrating, as far as elections, is that we faced a dilemma and I could see a way through it. It was absolutely clear that Trimble and Paisley would not join talks without decommissioning. Adams wouldn't or couldn't. We had to find a way around it and the only way I could conceive was the election route. What I said to Hume, which he grotesquely misrepresented, was that what we need is an election to a body with no legislative powers, no administrative authority, and time-limited so it could not be the old Just a passport to commit the Unionists to sit down with Adams. I had a whole series of meetings with Hume, Trimble and Paisley and also with Michael Ancram and we were close to getting a formula that all the parties could have accepted. We could have had the elections in six weeks and had them sitting down talking in eight weeks. Now this makes it unlikely, almost impossible I think.

President Clinton: Where do we go from here?

Prime Minister Major: At this moment I'm unsure. I'm very grateful for your statement and the speed in which it was made. I intend to dampen things down. I spoke to Bruton

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and I will speak with him tomorrow and Sunday. I think we just have to see what the ramifications are. It's a curious situation we just can't fathom. The codeword was a bona fide IRA codeword indicating the bombing was a Provisional Army Council effort. We no longer think that it's a splinter group. It was a mainstream Provisional Army Council effort. Yet the journalists who know Sinn Fein well said many of the people in Sinn Fein were caught flatfooted. Adams and McGuinness are PIRA council members and it's very surprising that Sinn Fein would be caught flatfooted. I suspect we will know soon enough. Maybe for some reason Adams and McGuinness didn't know - that is unlikely. Maybe they didn't tell anybody - that's more likely. Maybe they knew about it, but not the timing. Maybe there is some other explanation. In any event, I think we are going to see how to keep the show on the road. First, we must make sure that the British and Irish governments lock arms and I think Bruton and I will be able to do that. Then we can assess things. Trimble is on his way to you I think.

President Clinton: Yes he is, but he may think it will be a wasted trip now. I hope he still comes.

Prime Minister Major: I hope he still comes to you. Paisley has softened his position a great deal. We're surprised to the extent he has been accommodating, very surprised. I hope Trimble still goes to see you and you have a good talk with him and I can get a good readout from you or Tony.

President Clinton: We'll do that. Tony is talking to Holmes. I just wanted to say I was sorry. If there is anything I can do. We need to send a message to the Irish that we are pissed.

Prime Minister Major: And directly to Adams. Did you see Adam's statement?

President Clinton: Yes, it was a chicken-shit statement. That's not a very diplomatic statement!

Prime Minister Major: That's a good way to describe it.

President Clinton: He was here and seemed ill at ease. It's not like I had a premonition about this, but I had the feeling it was like he didn't know what to do. He didn't agree with elections, but I told him you clearly wanted a peace agreement.

Prime Minister Major: The argument that infuriates me is that I've taken these actions to get Unionist votes in the House of Commons. The reality is that if I wanted Unionist votes, I wouldn't have started this enterprise. You also saw that Molyneaux of the Unionists led a vote of confidence. You saw that the Unionists voted against it and the government almost fell. It's pretty bizarre. It is becoming a piece of legend, but it is untrue. If they had been at any meetings with the Unionists, they would know that.

President Clinton: Well it seems to me that it's not rational for them to assume you don't want to do this or you wouldn't have. Yes, well.

Prime Minister Major: I'm grateful for what you have done and let's keep in touch.

President Clinton: If you can think of anything else, let me know. I'll rack my brain.

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Prime Minister. OK, God bless. If we think of anything, we'll be in touch.

President Clinton: Thank you John.

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Clinton
Prime Minister Bruton

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526
2011-0355-F (3.24)
KBM 4/11/2023

LOCATION: Residence

NOTETAKERS: Daniel Flessas, Kathi Guekel, Deuce Martinez and Katherine O'Loughlin

DATE/TIME: 9 February 1996, 1849-1853 EST

President Clinton: Hello.

Prime Minister Bruton: Hello Bill.

President Clinton: I just wanted to call and tell you how sorry I am about what happened.

Prime Minister Bruton: It is dreadful really. It was completely sudden and unexpected. Thank you for your statement. It touched a lot of people. It appears a lot of Sinn Fein's leadership was taken by surprise.

President Clinton: Adams was just here a few days ago you know.

Prime Minister Bruton: I know. Since then I met with him and it seemed to be a normal meeting. He seems completely taken aback by what has happened, but it may be an act. His statement hasn't condemned or disassociated themselves from it, he just said regret which is what they used in statements during the height of violence.

President Clinton: Blaming the British under these circumstances is pretty gutless.

Prime Minister Bruton: No proportionality. In any event, the idea that we have been putting forth on proximity talks was beginning to gain some ground, beginning to bring the British opinion around. We will land it soon enough. This of course puts this on the back burner. We obviously have a huge number of decisions to take from the security perspective and what attitude to take with Sinn Fein. We don't want to rush into it, but we can't reverse the course. We have to keep hope alive.

President Clinton: Yes, I agree with that. We don't want to overreact. It is sad and troubling.

Prime Minister Bruton: Yes I know.

President Clinton: I just wanted to call and check in with you and tell you if you have any ideas about what we ought to do, just give us a call and let us know what to do and we'll do it.

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Prime Minister Bruton: Yes, I'd like to take the opportunity to call in a week or so if you have the time when things are a little clearer.

President Clinton: Oh, sure. I know you've got to think through this. I just didn't want this day to go by without talking to you.

Prime Minister Bruton: I appreciate it. Thank you very much indeed.

President Clinton: Thank you, friend.

Prime Minister Bruton: Good-bye.

President Clinton: Good-bye, thanks.

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IRA abruptly ends ceasefire with attack at

Bruton gives firm pledge to try to save peace process

By Geraldine Kennedy,
Political Correspondent

THE GOVERNMENT was of the belief early today that the abrupt ending of the 17-month-old republican ceasefire was the result of a "conscious decision" by the IRA.

But the Taoiseach, Mr Bruton, said that it was impossible to discern whether it represented "a permanent return to violence or a short-term measure".

The Cabinet's sub-committee on Northern Ireland will meet in emergency session at 10 a.m. today to continue its assessment of the consequences of the unexpected IRA announcement and the London bombing last night. It is understood that no clear strategy has been put in place yet to attempt to salvage the peace process.

Mr Bruton spoke personally to Mr John Major and President Clinton late last night. Officials in the Taoiseach's Office spoke to the Sinn Féin president, Mr Gerry Adams.

After the IRA announcement, but before the London explosion, the White House was informed by Mr Adams that he was hearing "very disturbing news" and would call back later. Mr Adams did not say that a bomb was due to go off.

The Minister for Justice, Ms Owen, last night cancelled a plan for the release today of a further nine republican prisoners from Portlaoise.

Following an emergency Cabinet meeting late last night, which was attended by the Garda Commissioner, Mr Patrick Culligan, the Taoiseach gave a commit-

INSIDE

**Reports, pictures, reaction;
political analysis by
Dick Grogan,
Denis Coghlan & Mary
Holland: pages 6-9**

ment to work in every possible way to get the peace process back on track. He insisted that the setback would be overcome "if we are determined enough and apply sufficient dedication and imagination to it".

Members of the Cabinet were "stunned, upset and surprised" by the IRA statement, sent to RTE, that the complete cessation of military operations had ended at 6 p.m. They were even more shocked by the London bombing an hour later.

The Taoiseach called on "all who may have any influence on those responsible for this appalling act" to use that influence publicly, as well as privately, to ensure that no further acts of violence took place.

No indication of the perilous state of the ceasefire was given to the Government at its meeting with Mr Adams and a Sinn Féin delegation last Wednesday.

President Clinton, in a statement, said that "no one nor no one organisation" had the right to deny the people of Northern Ireland the ability to enjoy their daily living without the threat of the bomb and the bullet.

Mr Major challenged the Sinn Féin leadership and the IRA "to

condemn immediately and unequivocally those who planted this bomb and any suggestion that the ceasefire is now over".

Mr Adams called on all sides to "hold their nerve" and remain calm. "Efforts to build a peace settlement must be redoubled", he said in Belfast last night.

Loyalist paramilitaries were urged not to retaliate by Mr Gusty Spence, who announced their ceasefire in October, 1994. The Combined Loyalist Military Command is to meet over the weekend to consider the IRA's renewal of violence.

The Fianna Fáil leader, Mr Bertie Ahern, said that the breakdown of the ceasefire was an "absolute tragedy". He has called a meeting of his front bench for 11 a.m. today.

The Government first learned of the IRA announcement when informed by RTE shortly after 6 p.m. Attempts began immediately to obtain confirmation of the statement. "We received indications that the situation could be serious", one official said, "but nothing absolutely definitive until the bomb went off."

Mr Bruton spoke to the Tánaiste shortly afterwards. Mr Spring was on board the Government jet on his way back from the US at the time.

Senior Garda sources are understood to have been given no indications that the ceasefire was about to be ended by the IRA, but British security services had recently been reporting a build-up of IRA activity in Britain and Northern Ireland.

Editorial comment: page 15



A victim of the Canary Wharf bombing, critically injured

Major's government faces crisis over its No