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Aug. 11, 95 - James Lyons Memo

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
8-15-95

August 11, 1995

MEMORANDUM

To: THE PRESIDENT
From: Jonathan Friebert
Re: James Lyons Memo

*Jack (Nancy)
interesting, advise
PK*

Mr. Lyons wrote a memo concerning your upcoming visit to Northern Ireland. His thesis is the root cause of turmoil in Northern Ireland is "open and pervasive discrimination, particularly in employment, education, and housing." Although not acknowledged by the U.S., the British government has assisted in opening these sectors of society to the Catholic minority.

Mr. Lyons believes that you could discuss the American experience of combating discrimination, particularly focusing on "constitutional and statutory protections." He thinks U.S. provisions for minority groups provide a good design for Irish lawmakers to follow. To make these resources available, Lyons thinks you should announce "the establishment of a permanent library and conference facility to be located in Northern Ireland" called the "United States Center for Peace in Northern Ireland" or "America House." He reasons this would not only "represent a permanent and valuable U.S. contribution," but would also symbolize your personal commitment to peace.

He has discussed this idea with Jack Quinn and the NSC staff. He will be in Ireland the week of August 21st and could begin conversations with key people. Please let him know through Jack Quinn or Nancy Soderberg how he should proceed.

(X)

M E M O R A N D U M

To: POTUS
From: James M. Lyons
Re: Presidential visit to Northern Ireland
("American Peace Center")
Date: August 10, 1995

I. BACKGROUND.

The principal causes of the years of unrest and violence in Northern Ireland are not religious differences or poor economic conditions, although both of these factors have contributed to the situation. Rather, the underlying source of unrest, distrust, and instability has been open and pervasive discrimination, particularly in employment, education, and housing.

Since the institution of direct rule of Northern Ireland by the British government over 20 years ago, a number of programs have been instituted by the British to address discrimination in these areas.¹

- ° Public housing in Northern Ireland is generally of the four-plex multi-family townhouse style located in well-landscaped areas with common amenities such as parks and open space. This housing is available to both Catholics and Protestants alike, and frankly is significantly superior to that found in most U.S. cities. Public housing is regulated by a government agency and is intended to be provided on a non-sectarian and need-determined basis.
- ° Employment laws barring discrimination have also been put in place and are theoretically enforced on a non-discriminatory basis through detailed and comprehensive reporting which is required of companies and businesses which are subject to the applicable laws.
- ° Public education, particularly at the college and university level, has successfully been opened to the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland. The result over the years has been that Catholics now outnumber

¹ Parenthetically, I would note that the British government has never received enough credit or recognition from the U.S. for these efforts. You may wish to address or acknowledge this in some way while you're in London.

Protestants at Queen's University in Belfast, which is the largest university in the province.

The four major churches in Northern Ireland (Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist), and private philanthropic or community organizations such as the Flax Trust have played an important role at the community or district council level in bringing people together in common purpose, encouraging dialogue, and promoting reconciliation between the two religious traditions. Governmental agencies of the British government and the European community as well as organizations like the International Fund for Ireland have also played substantial roles in promoting economic development through job creation and establishing mechanisms at the community level for tolerance and understanding.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done if peace is to become permanent and a political solution developed which will allow the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to achieve lasting harmony without outside intervention. The Hume-Adams talks, the Downing Street Declaration, the IRA ceasefire in August, 1994, and the Protestant/paramilitary ceasefire in the fall of 1994 have all created a true "window of opportunity" for meaningful political dialogue to take place. Nevertheless, as time goes by without substantial and significant progress, momentum could be lost and extremists could disrupt the fragile status quo for their own long-term purposes. In short, the window of "peace opportunity" may already be closing.

II. ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSE OF DISCRIMINATION.

You know first-hand as a "son of the new south" the tangible and constructive role played by the federal government over the last 25 years in combating racial discrimination in the U.S. (Similarly, federal law has played an important role in addressing the problems of age, gender, and ethnic discrimination.) The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (both the result of the leadership of another southern president), as well as equal or fair employment, housing and education laws have created a body of experience and jurisprudence which over a generation or more has significantly improved the lives of literally millions of Americans while strengthening the social fabric and economic vitality of affected regions, particularly the south.

In Northern Ireland, the thoughtful and moderate Unionists (mostly but not exclusively Protestant) sensed the inevitability of a Catholic majority in the province and some type of political arrangement, if not union, with the Republic. This group is increasingly mindful of their likely minority status in the future

and is looking to legal or constitutional protections such as our Bill of Rights to protect them when this day comes.

The combination of American anti-discrimination experience and our written constitutional and statutory protections of political minorities is a powerful model and resource which we can provide to Northern Ireland as a practical, lasting, and significant contribution in support of political talks and efforts to achieve a permanent peace. In order to make this American experience and resource available, I propose that, during your Ireland visit, you announce the establishment of a permanent library and conference facility to be located in Northern Ireland (probably in Belfast) to provide a resource to be used by all parties to the peace process.

The facility (working title: United States Center for Peace in Northern Ireland or "America House") would include:

°A full legal and academic library, including Westlaw and Lexis databases, focusing on anti-discrimination jurisprudence and constitutional scholarship, particularly in the area of individual and political rights. Eventually, the facility could possibly be computer linked to one or more major American law schools and/or the Library of Congress.

°The facility would include seminar and meeting rooms for use in conferences and programs as well as for use by participants in the ongoing peace process and the New Ireland Forum.²

°Office facilities for staff, fellows, and visiting scholars such as senior federal judges to provide personal, hands-on assistance at little or no additional cost to the facility or the United States (federal judges are appointed for life, as you well know, and continue to receive compensation upon senior status or retirement).

Ideally, the facility would be located in an area such as Springvale in West Belfast, where a major new branch campus of the University of Ulster is already under consideration at a site which is centrally located between the principal Protestant and Catholic

²The New Ireland Forum is an organization of political parties (North and South) which meets regularly to consult on the manner in which peace and stability can be achieved in a "New Ireland" through the democratic process and to explore structures through which this objective can be achieved. Membership is open to all democratic parties which have rejected violence and have elected or appointed members to the Dial or the Northern Ireland Assembly. Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Dick Spring and John Hume are both members of the Forum.

enclaves in this part of the city. Alternatively, the facility could be located at or adjacent to Queen's University.

Depending on the size and scope of the facility, a capital budget would need to be developed and funding sources identified. In this regard, the IFI has already pledged five million pounds to the Springvale Campus of Ulster University; this money could be earmarked for America House. Assuming this concept meets with your preliminary approval, we would need to solicit the views (and hopefully financial support) of the British government, the EC, and the Republic of Ireland. Additional funds through private Irish-American organizations and the United States could also be solicited.

I believe this concept outlines a project which could represent a permanent and valuable U.S. contribution to the peace process and is a project worthy of a Presidential announcement during your visit this fall. Certainly, given the role which you have personally played in advancing the cause of peace in Northern Ireland, such a project would be a fitting symbol of your contribution to peace and the centerpiece of your visit to Belfast.

I have preliminarily discussed this concept with several members of the White House and NSC staff and have reviewed it with Jack Quinn, who is enthusiastic.

Please let me know (through Jack Quinn or Nancy Soderberg) if you would like me to proceed to develop the details and support for such a project. I plan to be in Ireland the week of August 21, and could begin discussions with the necessary players and decision makers.

JML:kw

cc: Jack Quinn
Nancy Quinn

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 26, 1995

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

ANTHONY LAKE

SUBJECT:

Jim Lyons' Proposal for a "Peace Center" in Northern Ireland

Jim Lyons has suggested that one element of your upcoming visit to Northern Ireland be the announcement of an American "peace center" to make available to the people of Northern Ireland the American experience in combating discrimination. Lyons envisages a permanent library and conference facility to provide access to the American anti-discrimination experience and our written constitutional and statutory protection of political minorities.

A peace center has merit as a way to make a uniquely American contribution to resolving the conflict in Northern Ireland. However, as Lyons acknowledges, the blatant anti-Catholic discrimination of the Stormont era has ended. An American center focusing too narrowly on discrimination risks being seen as subtly equating the unionists with 50's-style Southern segregationists, which would be neither fair nor useful.

There is, however, considerable interest in Northern Ireland in political/minority rights and in issues related to the functioning of multi-cultural societies. An American peace center focused on sharing the experiences of the U.S., the UK and Ireland on these issues would be a significant asset to the long-term resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

We will need to investigate funding sources before deciding whether the announcement of such a peace center is feasible in time for your trip. Jim Lyons has suggested that the International Fund for Ireland would earmark \$5 million for the project, but the Board would have to vote to do so. If U.S. funding is secured, we would consider approaching the EU, which has just announced a multi-year \$561 million program for Northern Ireland, and the British and Irish governments for additional support.

Attachment

Tab A Memo from Jim Lyons

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

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