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December 2, 1996

The Honorable William J. Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500
Via Fax: 202-456-2461

Dear President Clinton,

On November 28th it was announced that the British and Irish governments would hold a summit meeting in London aimed at reviving the moribund Northern Ireland peace talks. This summit is the culmination of a series of meetings that have taken place over the last several weeks. On October 14th it was stated that a deal was struck in the Northern Ireland talks between the Ulster Unionist Party and the Social Democratic and Labor Party. It was enough for the British and Irish governments to proclaim "a sufficient consensus" to proceed.

On November 21st a press release declared that Prime Minister John Major was about to make a statement setting out the timetable for Sinn Fein involvement in multi-party talks in the event of an IRA cease-fire. Ulster Unionist party leader David Trimble stated at the time that he welcomed the commitment to clarify the outcome of discussions between the British government and Sinn Fein which have been mediated in recent weeks by SDLP leader John Hume.

Then on November 25th John Hume shared a plan with John Major, and Mr. Major rejected it. It is difficult to understand why events took such a convoluted course. Surely Mr. Hume's plan was in accord with the conclusions arrived at by both the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein. Yet it was rejected by Mr. Major.

Mr. President, I am writing to ask you to do all within your power to make the December 9th summit the pathway to the long delayed substantive peace talks involving all parties. I know you have said repeatedly that the IRA must declare a cease-fire but it seems logical that another cease-fire would be declared if Mr. Major would give the IRA the assurances for which it is looking.

Keeping in mind that there is no precondition in the Downing Street Declaration for the decommissioning or surrendering of arms by the IRA, that both Mr. Major and Sir Patrick Mayhew promised "generous" concessions if the IRA would declare a cease-fire, and that Mr. Major rejected the findings of the Mitchell Commission on decommissioning it is easy to understand why the IRA is reluctant to risk another cease-fire. In view of the elements in the IRA who never wanted a cease-fire, and the war mongering of the "continuity" contingent of Republican Sinn Fein the IRA is probably very fearful of splintering within the organization unless solid guarantees are given prior to another cease-fire.

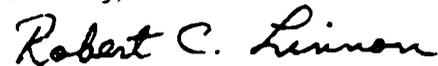
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There is considerable apprehension within the Irish American community that this summit will result in more doublespeak, that nothing concrete or constructive will be produced, and that it will result in more of the well-established stalling tactics.

Time is running out Mr. President. If this matter is not settled before an election takes place in Great Britain there could be a whole new set of problems and negotiations could be delayed indefinitely.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Linnon, Ph.D.
National President

cc: Ms. Nancy Soderberg