

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 7:08 PM
To: H
Cc: Abedin, Huma; Valmoro, Lona J
Subject: FW: Irish Times: North's leaders clash on devolution

See the story below. Consensus recommendation is that you call PR and MM tomorrow or Wednesday. Because we expect them both to go to the press after they speak with you, we believe it would be best for you to keep the calls at a very high level. Essentially:

- Two months have passed since your trip to Belfast and you're checking in;
- You're concerned about the news reports;
- You understand that there are substantive differences and frayed nerves, but you want to encourage all parties to take positive actions and avoid unhelpful ones;
- You remain prepared to assist in any way – you are personally invested in seeing them work through to the completion of this process;
- Declan is hard at work, but his efforts are hampered by the lack of progress and the public conflict

You would be mostly in listening mode and wouldn't engage substantively on the issues that are dividing them – parades (Sinn Fein doesn't want to concede anything on parades without a date for devolution) and a date (DUP doesn't want to set a date until they get progress on parades).

If you're amenable, we can move forward and schedule the calls.

Thanks,
 Jake

From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S (Belfast)
Sent: Monday, December 14, 2009 2:36 PM
To: 'Declan Kelly'; Sullivan, Jacob J; Cormack, Maureen E; Dwyer, Stuart A; Hackworth, Jason K; Abbaszadeh, Nima; McNicholas, Daniel F (London); Quinville, Robin S (London); Berry, Gregory L (London)
Cc: Roland, Kevin S (Belfast); Nystrom, Dwight D; Huizinga, Todd M
Subject: Irish Times: North's leaders clash on devolution

FYI. Kamala

North's leaders clash on devolution

The North's leaders Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness clashed in public today as the split at the heart of the power-sharing government deepened.

The clash came as Taoiseach Brian Cowen lead a team of Government ministers in a session of cross-Border talks with members of the Northern Ireland administration.

As the pair appeared before the cameras at a press conference their private disagreement over the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Stormont Assembly deepened when Mr McGuinness accused his counterpart of raising roadblocks to a deal.

As the men stood side-by-side in front of the media, a visibly angry Mr Robinson effectively reprimanded his opposite number accusing him of bringing private details into the public domain.

The temperature rose as Mr McGuinness continually shook his head in disagreement as Mr Robinson spoke.

The Sinn Féin deputy leader hit out at Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) calls for a scrapping of the Parades Commission, which rules on Orange Order parades, and said it could not be a pre-condition to a deal on the transfer of policing and justice powers.

Mr McGuinness: "I move forward against the backdrop of the agreements that I made with Peter Robinson 13 months ago where we agreed an over-30 step approach to the transfer of powers on policing and justice.

"I have to say at no stage in that process was the issue of issues being used as pre-conditions for the transfer of power for policing and justice mentioned."

In a reference to a DUP letter to the Prime Minister demanding 'confidence building' measures for unionists before a deal, Mr McGuinness added: "At no stage were people contemplating sending, on solo runs, letters to Prime Ministers which effectively I had not seen, was not made aware of and was completely surprised by."

Mr Robinson hit back by claiming republicans had already backed reform of parades, but had now opted to delay the measures as a tactic.

The First Minister, who glanced at his adviser and became visibly angry as Mr McGuinness spoke, added: "I regret the tone of the latter remarks.

"I don't think that it is helpful for us to be going into the finer details of these matters, but nobody is in any doubt that the issue of parades was moving forward and was held back."

The exchanges were seen as a public demonstration of the two leaders' long-running private dispute.

Mr McGuinness is already on record as having said that he has not been able to build an adequate relationship with Mr Robinson, despite having enjoyed a good working relationship with his predecessor as DUP leader, Ian Paisley.

The North-South Ministerial Council, first formed under the Belfast Agreement of 1998 is marking its tenth anniversary, but proceedings today were overshadowed by fears for the future of the Stormont Assembly.

Today's meeting in Limavady, Co Derry, brought together ministers from North and South, who announced progress on a series of cross-Border projects.

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