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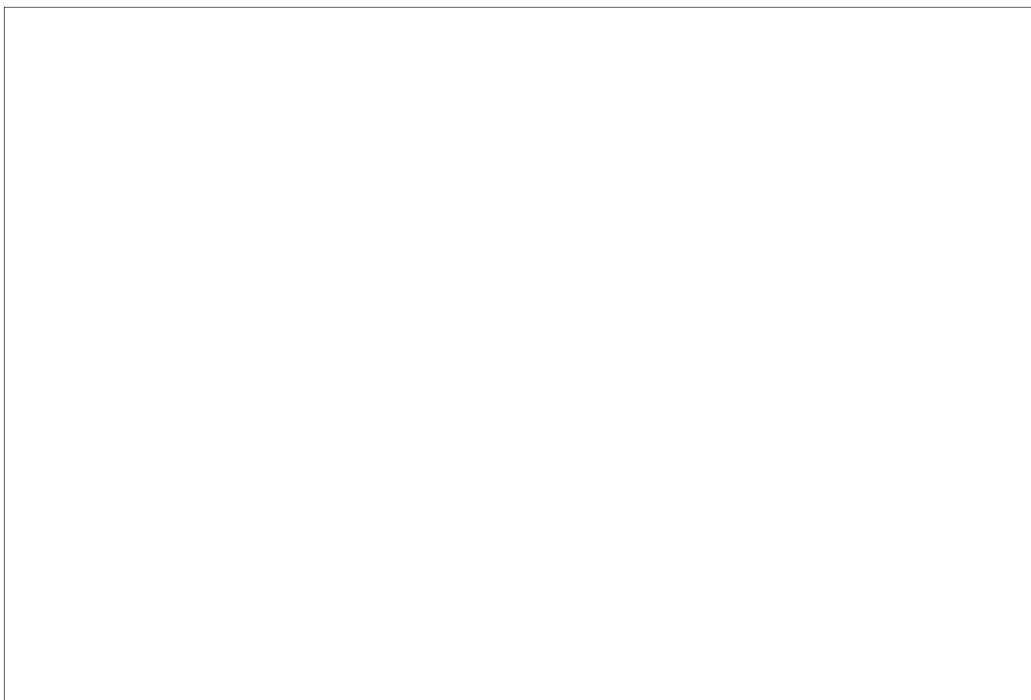
October 20, 2009

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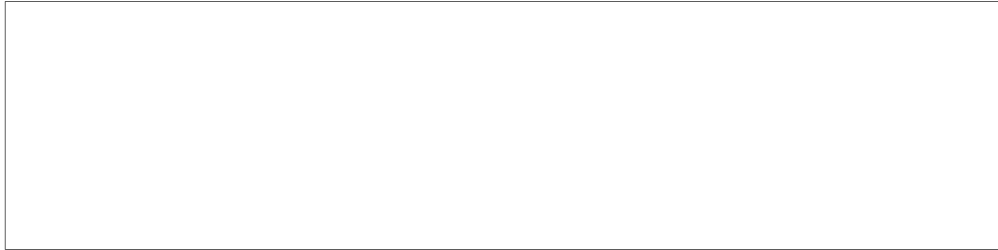
For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Hague Meeting and N. Ireland

Your meeting on October 21, Wednesday, with UK Shadow Foreign Minister William Hague might well touch on the Conservative Party's strange alliances with far right, anti-Semitic political parties on the continent and their implication for the Tories' anti-European posture (including on the Lisbon Treaty). (I have enclosed below an article from today's Guardian on the subject.)

But there is an urgent subject, of the utmost timeliness, that Hague can concretely affect—Northern Ireland peace negotiations. Below is the text of an email Shaun sent me this evening. It is self-explanatory. This makes your meeting with Hague unexpectedly pressing.



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Today's Guardian article:

William Hague under pressure from US over Conservative allies in Europe

Clinton urged to condemn party's links with Polish and Latvian right-wingers

- Ewen MacAskill in Washington and Nicholas Watt
- guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 20 October 2009 20.54 BST

The shadow foreign secretary, William Hague, is to meet the US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, in Washington tomorrow amid concern in the Obama administration about the Conservatives' European policy and Jewish outrage at their alliance with far-right parties with alleged antisemitic and neo-Nazi links.

There is growing unease in the White House that David Cameron's Euroscepticism could undermine the ability of a Conservative government to influence events in the EU, threatening to weaken Britain in the eyes of the US. Clinton, while anxious not to be seen to be interfering in a domestic election, has discussed the issue informally in Europe.

Influential Jewish groups in the US urged Clinton to raise with Hague the Conservatives' decision to enter a European parliament coalition with a Latvian party, some of whose members participate in an annual service commemorating Latvian units of Hitler's Waffen-SS, and a Polish politician who has questioned the need to apologise for an anti-Jewish pogrom during the second world war.

"I think Churchill would turn in his grave. It is an insult to the tradition of this great party," said George Schwab, president of the New York-based National Committee on American Foreign Policy and a Holocaust survivor from Latvia.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, the leading US organisation dedicated to fighting anti-semitism and one of American Jewry's most influential voices, said those outside Europe had the "right to raise moral questions", chiefly because the new grouping in Europe "legitimises extremism, bigotry, Holocaust denial and Holocaust revisionism".

The US is only now waking up to the consequences of Cameron's decision to order the party to quit the mainstream European People's party, which includes the parties of the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, and form a new Eurosceptic caucus, the European Conservatives and Reformists, with mainly east European rightwingers, including Michal Kaminski, of Poland's Law and Justice party, and Roberts Zile's Latvian party, For Fatherland and Freedom.

The Conservatives said Hague would discuss Afghanistan, the Middle East, Iran and the Balkans, during the Clinton meeting.

The Obama administration wants the UK government, its closest ally in Europe, at the heart of policy-making on the continent alongside Merkel and Sarkozy.

An American official, asked about the consequences for the US and about the far-right links, said: "I do not see any upsides in the new grouping. I can only see downsides. In life it is normally best to do things when they have an upside."

Louis Susman, the US ambassador in London, in an interview with the Financial Times, issued what could be interpreted as a warning to the Conservatives not to try to disrupt Europe.

European diplomats said Clinton believed it would be unwise to try to overturn the Lisbon treaty in the unlikely event that it has not been ratified by the time the Tories come to power. She is also understood to believe that it would also be unwise for a Tory government to try to undo earlier EU treaties.

"Hillary Clinton is concerned that the Tories would not take a lead in Europe," one European diplomatic source said. "It is clear that this US administration does not believe that Britain's relations with Europe and the EU are a zero sum game – the wrong-headed idea that if you are close to one you can't be close to the other. The US wants Britain to be fully engaged in the EU – that makes Britain more relevant in US eyes."

During his trip to Washington, Hague will also visit Congress for meetings with senators such as John McCain, who three years ago on a visit to Brussels warned the Conservatives not to leave the EPP.

There was a host of condemnation from Jewish organisations. Ira Forman, chief executive of the National Jewish Democratic Council, urged Clinton to take up the issue of antisemitic links with Hague. "I think there is obviously concern in the US when there is legitimacy conferred on individuals and political parties that have had some association with antisemitism," Forman said. "I think it is appropriate [for Hillary Clinton] to raise these concerns with Hague."

US officials watched with concern recent reports about Kaminski who questioned the decision of the former Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski to apologise for the 1941 Jedwabne massacre of at least 300 Jews. Kaminski has condemned the massacre, but indicated it was wrong to expect Poles to apologise until Jews apologised for alleged involvement with the Communists in Soviet-occupied eastern Poland.

Foxman described as "wrong and outrageous" Kaminski's views on the pogrom and his allegation that Jews were guilty of "mass collaboration". Foxman was equally scathing about the Tories' Latvian partner, the For Fatherland and Freedom party: "Their celebration of the Waffen SS shows where their moral failure lies. We'd call on responsible politicians to shun them."