

2020/17/16

S19003N

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Northern Ireland
Relations with SDLP

23/5/90 - 6/12/90

S19003N

START of file

CONFIDENTIAL

cc P84
Mr. Mills, PLS
an above 2

Conversation with Brian Feeney, SDLP, North Belfast.
6 December 1990

He was fairly downbeat when I met him and spoke at some length of the need for Nationalists to see the Agreement having an effect on the ground. He commented that media publicity to the effect that we had not been properly consulted on the EPA Bill tended to bear out the nationalist perception that no matter what, the British instinctively down-play the nationalist agenda. He instanced the fact that five years on, there was still no sign of movement on even a minor issues like street names in Irish.

The SDLP in Belfast:

He was downbeat at the chances of the SDLP making further inroads into the Sinn Fein vote at future elections. In that regard he pointed to the recent local by-election in Coalisland and the earlier Westminster by-election in Upper Bann which, notwithstanding IRA mistakes etc, showed no real change in the Sinn Fein vote. For this reason, he was predictably pessimistic as to the SDLP's chances in winning the West Belfast seat at the next Westminster election.

He was critical of the party strategy aimed at capturing the seat. While he thought the new SDLP office in Andersonstown would have a beneficial effect on their vote, he felt that the overall strategy was being controlled by people with little knowledge of West Belfast. (In this I took him to be referring to SDLP General Secretary Patsy McGlone who has organised a special party committee to control the activities of their new office in West Belfast.) The latest move of this committee has been to hire a "political expert" from England to help in organising their campaign. Apparently this move is as a result of some prompting by the Lalor Foundation - the brainchild of a London-Irish businessman who has been pouring significant funds into the coffers of the SDLP over the past two years. Apparently one of these experts (Carly Brown) recently arrived in Belfast and is reported to have been somewhat heavy-handed and lacking in subtlety in her approach to some community groups in West Belfast. Feeney expects this strategy to rebound badly on the party in West Belfast. [I heard the same complaint from Alex Attwood some weeks ago.]

[Note: Feeney makes no secret of his deep antipathy to Joe Hendron and of his intention to make a major play for the nomination following what he considers to be Hendron's certain failure at the next election. Another figure in the Belfast organisation following the same strategy is Alex Attwood who,

I understand, recently turned down a request from Hendron to act as his director of elections. In the event that Hendron fares badly at the next election, it is safe to predict a major battle for the nomination between Attwood who has been assiduously courting the grassroots and featuring regularly in the local newspaper, the Andersonstown News; Alistair McDonnell who has launched his Phoenix Trust - an employment creating agency for West Belfast; and Feeney who has a very high media profile and has been elected chairman of the recently revived Belfast District Executive of the party.]

The Belfast District Executive of the SDLP, which has been moribund for the past 10 years, has been revived with the particular objective of compiling a coherent submission for the forthcoming review of constituencies. Feeney has been elected Chairman of the Executive. The general feeling is that Belfast may have one Westminster seat too many, though Feeney assumes that the Government will not want to reduce the number of seats for Belfast. For this reason, he expects that the boundaries of the existing Belfast constituencies may be expanded either north into Glengormley and/or east into Castlereagh. As part of this process it is likely that the boundary of the West Belfast Constituency will be redrawn. This could go either of two directions - either to encompass the Catholic working-class housing estates of Poleglass & Twinbrook which are presently part of Lisburn, or across the motorway to encompass areas of Balmoral. The first option (ie to include Poleglass & Twinbrook) will in Feeney's view "copper-fasten Gerry Adams' seat for ever and a day". The other option (ie to include Balmoral) would introduce a mixed middle-class area which would be to the advantage of the SDLP - "though it would play havoc with house prices in Balmoral".

Police Liaison:

The RUC have designated North Belfast and Omagh as areas for a pilot project on community relations. In both areas, the RUC have contacted local councillors and leaders of various community groups to take part in regular meetings with the local RUC Sub-Divisional Commander and senior officers in order to try to iron out local problems. Notwithstanding SDLP policy, he has agreed to take part in the exercise. As reported previously, he feels strongly that with the horrendous rate of sectarian assassinations in North Belfast, nationalists need some sort of effective policing and the RUC is the only police force available at present.

The local response to the RUC initiative has been predictably disappointing from the point of view of the RUC. The SDLP, Alliance and Workers Party Councillors have agreed to take part, though Unionist Councillors have refused (Feeney assumes because they would have to sit in the group with him). Two or

three community groups on the Protestant side have agreed to participate, though only one community group on the nationalist side was prepared to take the risk.

While Feeney appears to value opportunities to build relations with the police, he has not been particularly impressed with the progress on this initiative to date. He felt that no matter what, the RUC always tend to be over sensitive to Protestant concerns at the expense of the Catholics. He instanced the case of Loyalist painting of the kerbstones on Skegoneill Avenue. This is an area which has a significant Catholic population who not unnaturally feel intimidated by the amount of loyalist graffiti and painting of kerbstones in the area. Last year he waged a campaign against the Dept of the Environment (DOE) to have this graffiti cleaned. This year he approached the RUC through this new community relations framework. The response was to the effect that the RUC had checked locally and found that "not everyone objected to the painting". For this reason, they felt there was little they could do and suggested that Feeney again approach the DOE himself on the matter. Feeney commented that it was the same old story, the RUC were not prepared to stick their necks out on behalf of the Catholic minority living in that area - "once again nationalist concerns take second place to unionist concerns".

IPLO:

As reported previously (my report of 25 May refers) he is increasingly worried at the apparent growth of the IPLO in areas of West and North Belfast - notably Divis, Twinbrook, New Lodge and Lenadoon. The IPLO apparently draw their recruits from local criminals (hoods) who have banded together to protect themselves from the Provos. To date there has been no attempt by the Provos to take them on and, in fact, the Provos have used them on occasion to carry out the odd sectarian killing.

He understands from RUC contacts that the recent murder of a young Catholic man, Gary Campbell in Spamount Street in North Belfast, was not the work of the UVF as claimed, but rather the work of the IPLO. Campbell was apparently targeted after he beat up a prominent member of the IPLO (with the unusual name of O' Prey) in a bar in Belfast.



Brendan McMahon
Anglo-Irish Division
11 December 1990

cc A/Sec Gallagher
Counsellors A. I.
Secretariat
Box

Confidential

Conversation with Seamus Mallon

1. I met Seamus Mallon in Armagh on the evening of 30 November.

2. Brooke Initiative

Mallon can still see no reason to believe that the talks may get under way. He believes, however, that the search for a way to start talks should continue and he repeated that view in his Irish Times interview published that day. At the same time, he expressed strong opposition to entering into talks without the ground rules being clearly agreed in advance: if we did, "the British would make mincemeat of us." He is trying to convey in his public statements the implications which talks would have: for example, on the security front he would see successful talks as meaning that "the people who are at present patrolling the streets will no longer be doing so." He doubted if these kinds of implications had sunk in.

3. Emergency Provisions Bill

My main purpose was to brief him on the most recent developments regarding the Bill and to discuss tactics for the Committee stage which has been put back to Thursday 6 December. Mallon is liaising with Kevin McNamara and has drafted a number of amendments which he showed me. I told him that there has been no sign so far of the British being prepared to take any of our proposals on board; he is not optimistic either of getting his amendments taken.

4. IRA in South Armagh

Mallon says that the IRA are getting increasingly bolder in South Armagh. The leaflet they passed out at Crossmaglen a couple of weeks ago threatening shopkeepers and other people who "collaborate with Free State forces and other government officials" was evidence of this. He has a good idea of who that leaflet was aimed at; he believes that the references in the leaflet to recreational centres have to do with the football pitch in Crossmaglen and our efforts to resolve the remaining

Mr. M. C. ...
7.12.90
6/11

cc. PSM, Mr. Nally,
PSP: Mr. Matthews,
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problem there. Also, an elderly couple were intimidated on their way to Mass (the husband's teeth were knocked in) on the grounds that they were "informing" on the IRA. Mallon wants to speak out and attack the IRA and he has drafted a statement. What is holding him back is his concern about his constituency workers as he thinks it likely that the IRA could target one of them in retaliation.

5. He is going to give his support to a proposal by the Department of the Environment that the entire road between Newry and the border get public lighting. He had reservations because of the cost (£140,000) and the fact that this money could be used to good purpose elsewhere but he has now come around to believing that it is a good idea.

6. Mallon thinks the warning of imminent IRA attacks issued by the security forces must be the result of solid information that the IRA are planning "a spectacular" in the run up to Christmas. He questions the wisdom of these public warnings as he feels they bring a "macho" element into play. He was also dubious of the value of the new television ads for the confidential telephone.

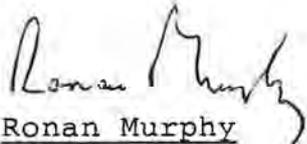
7. John Major

He feels that the new Prime Minister is "a blank page" as regards Ireland. Mallon thinks that there will be a big change in the style of British politics: Mrs. Thatcher's conviction politics will be replaced by policies tailored to suit the voters' mood. Whether this will be of benefit to Northern Ireland remains to be seen. Mallon does not like some of the people John Major is friendly with, for example David Mellor. He was sorry to see John Cope leave the NIO as he had found him easy to deal with; the opposite is true in the case of Brian Mawhinney, though Mallon has found that Mawhinney is susceptible to flattery. He is not pleased at the fact that Mawhinney will be steering the Emergency Provisions Bill through the Committee stage.

8. SDLP Conference

Mallon had returned from a gruelling visit to America on the eve of the conference and had been exhausted. He had been

disappointed at the overall poor quality of the debate. The political section should not have been put on at 5 p.m. and the debate on the administration of justice coincided with a reception hosted by the Mayor of Derry. He felt that Eddie McGrady's speech had "put the rest of us in an awkward position", though he added, enigmatically, "maybe he read the situation better".



Ronan Murphy

4 December, 1990.

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
SOCIALIST GROUP**



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cf. page 21 et al
With Compliments

*by Mr. [unclear]
19 11 90*

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE: 16th Nov 1990.

TO: Mary Whelan.

FOR:

FROM: attention of Dermot Gallagher

*John de la [unclear] or
[unclear]*

Total number of pages, including this cover sheet: 45.

Brief description of material: John Humes Speech.

Instructions/Requests:

*see pp 21-30
et pp 25-30*

Transmitting operator:

Sending Fax Number: 265340.

*cc PST: RPT
to Mr. [unclear]; All: Dr. [unclear]*

confidence that all other problems, particularly the deep divisions among our people could be solved by normal democratic and political means.

This party was born out of the Civil Rights Movement and was fundamentally based on the same philosophy, a philosophy that we have steadfastly pursued ever since. It is best summed up in the words of one of the great men of the 20th Century that I have quoted often, - Martin Luther King - words that are quite prophetic when applied to the violence on our streets today:

"Violence as a way of achieving justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. It

leaves society in monologue rather than dialogue. Violence ends by defeating itself. It creates bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the destroyers".

The tragedy for this society and for this country was that there were people at that time who, in spite of the new energy, new vision and new hope generated by the Civil Rights Movement, believed that change was worthless and unpatriotic unless it was steeped in blood. Their basic view of Ireland is as a piece of territory. Its people are expendable.

For us Ireland is its people. The piece of territory without them is but a jungle and in any case it is already united; it is the people who are divided and they will never be united by force or coercion. It is also an accident of birth where and what we are born. Those who are members of the IRA might well have been born in Ballymena or East Belfast. Had they been born there many of them would no doubt today be members of the UDR or the RUC in the sincere

belief that they were defending their own traditions and their own identity. All of this underlines the futility of trying to respond to difference by pushing it to the point of division or by wiping it out. Victories are not solutions.

In most parts of the world today where there are serious and apparently insoluble problems, it is because of refusal to accept difference; refusal to recognise that the essence of stability and unity in any society is the acceptance of diversity. Where difference exists, the real task is to accommodate it - not to wipe it out.

Indeed, in most places too, where conflict is at its most vicious, the name of God or Allah, is often called down in support of one side or another. Has it never occurred to them, if they really believe in God, that God created everyone of us and that in the entire human race there are not two people who are the same. Difference therefore is of the essence of creation and should never be a source of hatred or conflict. The

richness of difference and diversity should always be the source of respect, preservation and development.

We all know the part which symbols of difference play in the life of the North. We are constantly reminded of battles fought long ago, of famous victories and ignominious defeats. On both sides, we have our legends of courage, treachery and deceit. Each tradition, in its collective memories, seems to seek to define itself through opposition, what we are against. The history of Northern Ireland becomes an ever playing re-run of some sordid drama of blinkered resentment and fruitless despair - what aboutery We seem trapped in a never ending zero sum game where, by definition, my gain is your loss and vice versa.

In many cases, the development of the nation states of Europe has also seemed to rely on an approach which sees conflict as somehow fundamental. Indeed, the unseemly rush for colonial possessions by the major European powers in the 19th Century and before was based

in large part on the need to define themselves through competition with others. Britain could not be Britain nor France France, nor Germany Germany unless each country dominated either one another or some unfortunate "third party" to their struggles elsewhere on the globe. Often the imperial psyche could be satisfied only if the victim country, already dominated or colonised, had in turn been grabbed by one predator power from the jaws of a major rival.

We in both parts of Ireland once knew only too well the reality of this power system. In different ways, both traditions on this island have suffered much, sometimes in support of, sometimes in opposition to the old European concept of an order based on division between peoples and states. However, in the countries of Western Europe especially, whatever rationale ever existed for this order perished with the millions of dead of the two world wars of this century.

The European experience, it is now clear to all, demonstrates the catastrophic

consequences inherent in a system of relations which feeds on and defines itself primarily in terms of rivalry and refusal to accept difference.

Of course the most important and most inclusive symbol of this new order of relations in Europe is the European Community.

In this regard, it is surely significant that Franco-German reconciliation needed to find a wider forum to bring about the most lasting changes in their respective approaches. The sheer intensity and massiveness of the historical pressures towards division were transformed in the broader context of the original Community.

It is also significant that the Community came into being in limited areas which went to the heart of the relationships between the founding countries. They began with their common ground. They began with coal and steel, the critical products for waging war in Europe and

sovereignty was pooled in these areas.

The reason I am concentrating so much on the European experience is obvious. If countries and peoples that slaughtered one another in millions, twice in this century alone, can lay aside their past, can build institutions which respect their differences, which allow them to work their common ground together, to spill their sweat and not their blood and to grow together at their own speed towards a unity that respects their diversity and evolves through patient agreements, can we on this small island not do likewise?

Indeed given that both parts of this island have already voted for that European process and have agreed to the pooling of sovereignty and new relations with Greeks, French, Germans, Spanish, Dutch, Danes etc, is it not long past time when we should build new and agreed relationships with one another?

The achievement of European Union is nothing short of remarkable. All we have

to do is to cast our minds back to 50 years ago this very day and the slaughter and devastation that was under way. To have constructed a new order in Europe, removing war and conflict as a means of settling difference is a priceless achievement in terms of human life alone. It is nothing less than a joke to suggest as Mrs Thatcher does that the type of coin - pound or ecu - with which we buy a pint is a matter of fundamental principle which can prevent this continuing evolution. It is more than a joke, it is an expression of the nineteenth century nationalism which led to world wars and which was the driving force of imperialism. That nationalism is thankfully now gone. The world has changed and advanced and it is clear that even Mrs Thatcher's own people recognise that.

Unhappily, the proxy bomb strategists of the IRA cannot perceive that the world has advanced. The IRA analysis of the Northern Ireland problem is as irrelevant to current realities as Ceaucescu's demented ideas were to the welfare of the

Romanian people. The IRA are the true heirs of the old imperialism. Their tools are death and destruction, their aim is conquest through fear and terror, their mindset is sectarian divisiveness. The "mistakes" which they admit are the murder of the innocent. Their doctrine is an eye for an eye and they are blind. By their own standards let them be judged.

They proclaim the proclamation of 1916 as their bible and basic guide. Have they even read it? Let me quote it: "We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity or rapine?" Was the blessing of the Most High God on the bomb that made a human time bomb out of Patsy Gillespie? Was there no cowardice in making people carriers of death to others? Was there no inhumanity in the killing of Louis Robinson or any of their other recent victims?

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Leaders of the Provo Republican Movement have said that they are seeking dialogue and will respond to genuine dialogue. I hope that they are serious.

Let me directly address them. Let me ask them some questions. Perhaps they might answer. If they are serious they will.

Leaving aside the morality of your campaign, militarily how do you justify a military campaign in which you have killed six times more people than the British Army, the RUC and the UDR put together?

How do you justify a campaign in which more than half the people killed are innocent civilians killed through your "mistakes" and the eye for an eye response of the loyalists? How do you justify a campaign in which even among your own members who have lost their lives, more than half of them were killed by yourselves?

Now let us move to your own stated political reasons to justify what you call armed struggle. You state that you are fighting for the right of the Irish people to self-determination?

Do you accept that the Irish people are divided as to how that right is to be exercised? Do you accept that agreement cannot be achieved by killing members of the Protestant community? Do you accept that the Irish people have the right to self-determine the methods that are used in their name?

To continue to the the other reasons that you have given. You say that force is justified by you because the British are here defending their own interests by force, interests which you define as economic and strategic. Have you not noticed that events in the outside world, and in Europe in particular have changed the nature of the British- Irish quarrel?

Ireland has had links with Europe going

back for centuries evidence of which can still be found in many parts of Europe today. It was precisely those links that brought England into Ireland in the first place because she regarded Ireland as the back door for her European enemies. The Plantation of Ulster was England's response to O'Neill and O'Donnell's links with Spain. The Act of Union was England's response to the French invasion of Ireland.

Now that has all changed. Britain is now pooling sovereignty not just with France and Spain but with Ireland and eight other European countries as well. That has fundamentally changed British -Irish relations. The two Governments together participate in the ongoing process to achieve progress across the ever expanding range of Community issues. Common membership of a new Europe moving towards unity has provided a new and positive context to situate the discussion of sovereignty in these islands.

It is no longer sovereignty and

independence that is the issue. It is shared sovereignty and interdependence and the Irish have it open to them to rebuild, as they are doing, their links and common interests with the rest of Europe and become part of the European majority.

There does remain a legacy of the past however, one of which we are all too deeply aware. We are a deeply divided people and that division cannot be healed by force. 'Oh,' you may reply, that is only your interpretation of events but the reality is different.

My response to that is to ask you if you have studied Mr Peter Brooke's speech last week. He gave the clearest statement yet of British policy in Ireland in a speech which was very far reaching and positive and which fundamentally addresses and challenges the reasons which you, the Provisional Republican Movement give for the use of force. Let me simply quote him:

(1) "The British Government has no selfish strategic or economic interest in

Northern Ireland. Our role is to help, enable and encourage. Britain's purpose as I have sought to describe it is not to occupy, oppress or exploit, but to ensure democratic debate and free democratic choice. That is our way". (2) "In Northern Ireland it is not the aspiration to a sovereign united Ireland against which we set our face but its violent expression".

(3) "The obstacle to the development of a new and more inclusive Irish identity if people want this for themselves is not to be sought in Great Britain. Those who live here would not bar the way if at some future time that were to be the wish of the people of Northern Ireland themselves; indeed the Government has made clear on several occasions, notably in signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement that if in future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland it would introduce and support in Parliament legislation to give effect to that wish".

(4) "Partition is an acknowledgement of reality not an assertion of national self

interest".

(5) "Just imagine what developments of positive benefit to all sections of the community and both parts of the island of Ireland would be bound to follow a permanent end to violence".

(6) "... the transfer from the Common Exchequer every year of very large sums of money to enable programmes well beyond the capacity of locally raised taxation to be carried out. This support is not given in support of some strategic interest or in expectation of some corresponding gain to the people of Great Britain. It seeks no return other than the satisfaction of improving the conditions of life in Northern Ireland".

(7) "There is a need for reconciliation at three levels - between the communities in Northern Ireland; within Ireland; and between the peoples on both these islands."

(8) "An Irish republicanism seen to have finally renounced violence would be able, like other parties, to seek a role in the peaceful political life of the community."

In addition Mr Brooke makes clear that an

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end^f to violence will mean an end to troops in our streets and to the considerable arsenal of police weaponry. Mr Brooke, in the name of the British Government, is throwing down a clear challenge to the Provisional IRA. He is telling them with clarity that whatever about the past the reasons that they give for the use of force today no longer exist and that if they want the unity of Ireland they can have it if they persuade those Irish people who do not want it.

All that happening in a context where borders are going down all over Europe, where borders including the Irish one will be no more than county boundaries and where the common economic ground between both parts of Ireland is increasing daily and will be virtually identical in the Single Europe of which we will be the offshore island. Wouldn't it be one of the great ironies if the only sign of a border anywhere in the European Community were the military checkpoints on the Irish border maintained by an IRA campaign?

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Before they rush to tell us that the challenge laid down by Mr Brooke gives right to a veto to the Unionist population on the future of Ireland let us point out that it is not a matter of right but a matter of fact. There is no way, because of the population structure and geography of this island we can have a final settlement without the clear agreement of the people of the North.

Did not Wolfe Tone say that his object was to unite the people of Ireland Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. If he wanted to unite them they must have been divided and that was 125 years before Partition institutionalised the divide.

In 1891 Charles Stewart Parnell, in one of his last speeches before he died, delivered in Belfast said: "It has been undoubtedly true that every Irish patriot has always recognised from the time of Wolfe Tone until now that until the religious prejudices of the minority" - the Protestant population - "whether reasonable or unreasonable, are

concoiled, Ireland can never enjoy perfect freedom, Ireland can never be united".

In short Ireland could not have either unity or independence until the differences between our own people on this island are confronted and accommodated. Isn't that exactly what Peter Brooke is saying today. Except for one important and fundamental difference.

If either Tone or Parnell had achieved unity there is no guarantee that it would have been endorsed by the British Government of the day; because there is no doubt that in those days Britain did have a vested interest both economic and strategic in Ireland. Today Peter Brooke, on behalf of his Government, is making clear that if agreement is reached then not only will the British Government not stand in the way they will support it and legislate for it.

The challenge is clear. Have the Provos

sufficient confidence in themselves and their beliefs to come to an agreement with their fellow Irishmen without guns or bombs. Anyone who needs a gun to persuade or convince someone else of his or her beliefs does not have much confidence in those beliefs.

The challenge is not of course confined to the Provos, it is to the rest of Ireland as well because such agreement will not be easy and will be only achieved if we are all committed to a planned process designed to achieve lasting agreement among the people of this island. There is also a major challenge to the Unionists. Remember 1690 is no longer enough. Indeed if they do remember 1690 they will recall that it was a very European occasion. All the present peoples of the European Community were there on one side or the other, except the Greeks and all have since not only settled the 1690 quarrel but many more since.

They will also recall that it was about civil and religious liberty. Leaving

aside the fact that in practice they themselves have long since forgotten what civil and religious liberty is all about, if we examine their abuse of power not only when they had real power but even in today's local councils, would they not agree that civil and religious liberty appears to be well protected in today's Europe of which we are all a part and that any agreement that would be reached on this island must similarly reassure them, otherwise they wouldn't agree to it.

X The real question is, how do we get there. Let me repeat the proposal that we made two years ago. We have offered, and offer again, to the Unionists that we sit down without preconditions to discuss the problem that we face. We defined the problems as conflicting sets of relationships which had never been resolved to everyone's satisfaction - relations within the North, between North and South and between Britain and Ireland. We went further and said that we felt that the central relationship, the one that went to the heart of the

problem, was the Unionist relationships with, or rather their distrust of, the rest of the island.

That was the reason why they rejected Home Rule with all the consequences of that rejection. That is why they excluded the Nationalist population from any say whatsoever at any level under Stormont. That in the end brought Stormont down and was the beginning of the present phase of the crisis. That was why they opposed power-sharing and the Sunningdale Agreement and that is why they are opposed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

It therefore seems logical to us that until that relationship is settled, to the Unionist satisfaction as well as everyone else's then nothing is going to work and it would be foolish to go down any other road.

Now that analysis is either right or wrong. We would welcome the view of any other party, particularly the Unionists. If they disagree with us then let them

put their view on the table for discussion as well. What is more, in order to assure Unionists beyond doubt that we mean what we say when we talk of agreement we have suggested that any agreement reached should be endorsed in a referendum by a majority in each part of the island and if either says no, the agreement falls.

To us that reassures the Unionist people that their agreement is necessary, and for the rest of Ireland for the first time the people of Ireland as a whole would have spoken, they would have expressed their self-determination, in agreement. No genuine Irish person could or would stand against such an agreement so approved and anyone who did would be facing the combined strength of the people of the island as a whole.

We are in no doubt that such an agreement would be very difficult to reach but with real good will it could be. The SDLP would suggest and again this suggestion is for the table and subject to the views of all other parties - that a sensible

first step might be for both Governments to make a joint declaration, following the post-war example of European states, that they were setting the past aside. It is too easy for all of us to recall the past in order to justify the present and paralyse the future.

Secondly that they would ask the representatives of all parties North and South to agree institutions of Government North and South that would not only respect difference but allow us to work the common ground together.

That common ground - largely economic - is virtually identical North and South in the new Europe. Already there is no difference between our farmers in our largest and most important industry - agriculture. That common ground will only intensify when with the Channel Tunnel we become the offshore island of the new Europe. Indeed think of the impact of a joint approach to the U S and Canada to seek the inward investment that they will want in order to get a foothold in the Single Market and we will want to

give hope to our young. By working the common ground, the old poison will be extracted from our relationships. The distrust will evaporate as well as the prejudices and fears as we spill our sweat together and not our blood and in a generation or two we will evolve into a completely new Ireland born of agreement, built by our common toil and totally respectful of our diversity.

That proposal for talks which we put on the table two years ago remains on the table and we offer it again. I repeat, other parties are naturally free to put any other topic on the table. The Unionists refused two years ago. I ask them to reconsider.

I have to confess that I find their approach difficult to understand. They said that they could not talk to us while the Anglo-Irish Agreement remained in existence. Jim Molyneaux recently described it as "a miserable narrow minded contradiction". Yet he will only talk to us through the Secretary of State of the Government that negotiated that

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agreement and registered it with the United Nations.

In addition it has emerged that they will only talk to the South as part of a delegation led by the same Government! And yet his party will not stand beside the same Secretary of State at a ceremony in Belfast to remember the dead of two world wars. In trying to understand this contradiction my only logical conclusion is that like the Provos, the Unionists do not have the confidence to stand on their own feet and represent their own people without additional assistance!

In reality, it was the repeated failure of Unionist politics to discard outmoded ideas of domination which led the two governments, working in the closest co-operation, to agree a structure designed to guarantee the rights of both traditions on this island. The Agreement was therefore an admittedly circumscribed effort to remove the concrete causes of much of the "sectarian and political confrontation" Mr Molyneaux refers to.

Both Governments accept that the Agreement is not written in stone. It can be built upon and transcended. The current political initiative is designed to see if the willingness exists on all sides to make political progress. Yet, I must once again ask: where is this willingness on the Unionist part?

Despite all the evasions and subtle doubletalk, the reality regarding the talks process is clear. The Unionist parties laid down three pre-conditions for their participation. Both Governments, after due consideration and clarification, agreed to respond to these as a basis for commencing comprehensive negotiation. X

No sooner was this stage reached than the Unionist parties stipulated a new pre-condition: "substantial progress" had to be achieved in one area of the talks before discussion could begin in other areas. It then transpired as I have said that there was a further pre-condition: the Unionist parties lacked the confidence to participate in North-South

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talks in their own right - instead, they wanted to be members of a delegation headed by the Secretary of State.

It seems curious, to say the least, that the Unionists are insisting on being members of a British Government delegation in talks with the Irish Government about transcending the "miserable narrow minded contradiction" which the British Government had signed and registered with the United Nations:

If the talks are to be about a new Agreement, which is what the Unionists want, then it is the two Governments who should decide the timing of the different strands - not any of the parties in the North. If we were to put in similar preconditions based on our stated public position the talks would be gone before they had started.

Let me also make clear that neither the SDLP nor the Irish Government have insisted that all strands of the talks begin together. What we have said is

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that since the agreed period for talks was 10 weeks that all talks should be underway within weeks.

The SDLP, in order to leave no doubts, put its position in writing. In order to meet the concerns of the Unionist parties about their electoral promises we made it clear that we accepted that they were entering the talks in keeping with their stated public positions and that if any agreement reached represented a departure from those positions that it would have to be approved by the people anyway in a referendum. Any politician with his or his salt with any self confidence should be able to talk to anyone on those conditions.

Nevertheless, let us leave aside the negative and explore the positive.

I am encouraged by certain indications of willingness on the Unionists' part to explore the potential which exists for positive progress. I welcome Jim Molyneaux's acknowledgement that the totality of relations between the two islands needs to be addressed.

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There is agreement that this totality includes the relationships existing within Northern Ireland, between North and South as well as between Britain and Ireland. There is then an apparent consensus among politicians that the structural, the so-to-speak architectural dimensions to the problem need to be addressed on a comprehensive basis. There is also the view that the outcome of any talks should be approved simultaneously by a majority in both North and South.

I have already argued that the processes in Europe seem to be about finding ever more comprehensive symbols to give form and meaning to the new realities. To repeat myself again, our metaphors and symbols seem instead invariably to focus on what is divisive in the past. Too many in both traditions seem held in thrall by our shared failure to transcend and transform the negative elements in the legacy from the past. Somehow, somehow we need to invent our own creative and transcending Irish equivalent to the coal and steel

community which forms the basis of today's democratic order in Europe.

Jim Molyneaux in his Conference speech refers to the North Channel between Ireland and Scotland. He says that the Channel "far from constituting a political divide has down the ages been a means of communication". However, I think we would be better advised to focus attention on another channel, that between Britain and France, in considering where we stand today in 1990. In this regard, it is clear to all that the Channel Tunnel represents more than a means of communication (although this aspect is also very important). It also provides a contemporary metaphor of overcoming a political divide. It represents in a tangible form the coming together of the island of Britain with the European land mass. It stands for the breaching of the moat, the realisation that the isolated fortress of the nation state will have little meaning in the new democratic European order. I think we all sense that, irrespective of the latest bulletins from London, there

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is a growing impetus for full British involvement with the contemporary Europe.

The Channel Tunnel has helped to crystallise a common unease on this island, North and South. There is a palpable fear that our solitary island status in the European Community will leave us further behind the mainstream of developments. I heard Jim Nicholson recently suggest, with obvious concern, that Ireland might become "some Brigadoon, some Quiet Man" type film set location, a quaint anachronism for wealthy Europeans to scratch their heads about. There is at last evidence of a new urgency to identify additional areas of common ground on this island, to take common concerted positions on the ever increasing range of economic and other opportunities which the new Europe offers for those able to take them.

Nevertheless, the experience of the Community is that progress - now so rapid and so far-reaching - has proved possible only once the core issues at the heart of the historic problem were acknowledged

and their resolution tackled. For Europe, the ideology of the nation state, seeking to define itself in terms of the divisive, the separate and the apart, was a critical paralysing problem. The experiment with the European Coal and Steel Communities represented the willingness of historical antagonists to work in common on precisely those issues at the heart of their experience of past hatred and division. In Ireland, we will not reach this stage by forever piling up new conditions and pre-conditions for building an acceptable future for all on this island. Let us agree to enter talks without any precondition save our stated public positions. Let us agree that any agreement reached, which will undoubtedly involve for all of us a change in these positions, must be approved by the people. Such an approach to talks allows any party to enter them honourably.

Our interest in achieving new political arrangements and relationships is inspired by more than our commitment to reconciliation and peace. It is also informed by the fact that we realise that

only when decision making arrangements operate in a framework of consensus can our society have optimum democratic control and influence over the economic and social factors which affect the well-being of individuals and communities.

The SDLP's concern to achieve an agreed Ireland, and our work towards properly democratic European structures, therefore are not a diversion from democratic socialist ideals. Instead they are proof that we are serious about creating circumstances which will allow us to best promote those ideals rather than indulging in leftist self-regard.

In the difficult and frustrating context of our past 20 years we have done well to preserve, develop and promote a principled and practical Social Democratic approach. Equity has been a central pillar in all facets of our policy. Our pursuit of equality, and our defence of the pursuit of equality, is determined by our belief in the indivisibility of human dignity.

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That belief underlies our concern to promote economic development to counter the waste of human talent and hurt to the human spirit of unemployment. We pursue measures not just to eliminate discrimination in employment whether on grounds of sex, religion, politics or disability but also to overcome the legacy of past discrimination. Fairness must not stop at job opportunities but must extend to justice in wages, working conditions and respect for the contribution of loyal labour. We have therefore opposed this Government's low wage strategies, its rejection of the European Social Charter and the effects of privatisation in its various guises.

Not only Government or employers can dismiss the dignity of those in work and their or their families' very dependency on their jobs. There are those who have sacrificed jobs by attacking so-called economic targets and now threaten and attack workers as legitimate targets. They show a contempt for the rights and for the honest, and often pressing, motives of ordinary working people.

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^A These workers threaten noone. Their attackers threaten us all.

We not only assert the right to life of all, we stand for enhancing the quality of life for, all. Throughout the lifetime of this party we have upheld the case for accessible, adequate and equitable health services and education, for social security provisions which overcome need rather than underscore poverty and for housing programmes which aim at decent, affordable homes in an attractive environment.

It was outrage at the housing problems in our community which led many of us to political activity. I can recall my first election manifesto - in 1969 - in which I advocated the establishment of a centralised housing agency for Northern Ireland, properly resourced, which would take housing out of bigoted and incompetent hands in local government then. We persuaded the British Government accordingly. Going around this city who will deny that our housing situation has been radically transformed.

It is crucial to protect and advance that achievement. Curbs on the Housing Executive's budget and other aspects of Government housing policy are a source of concern. I would however like to welcome the recent moves towards a strategy on rural housing problems including appalling unfitness levels. The record shows that the SDLP initiated this debate and have been advocating such a programme for years. If resources and appropriate legislation will be forthcoming, generosity might allow us to say "better late than never".

It is worth remembering that as we formulated our case on rural housing we were also standing up for hospital services in rural areas and small towns. We heard nothing of choice when these and other facilities were run down. Today as we face the prospect of hospital opt-outs from the N H S we have to ask can communities not opt out from Government N H S policy in this area. Changes threatening the fabric and spirit of the N H S are being pursued with undue haste.

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It is a pity that the Government could not show the same urgency about getting patients into operations as they do about getting plans into operation.

Twinned with our concern for the health services are our reservations about the quality of community care proposals. We have long supported the principle of community care but it must be planned and resourced so that it does not simply mean abandonment or solely family care with particular burdens on women. We all know of existing gaps in what is supposed to be our integrated health and social services. We cannot accept a situation where such gaps will become black holes of utter neglect into which those most in need of support and care will be allowed to disappear.

We have already seen that syndrome with the corruption of the social security system. After all the smarm about "targetting need" we have been left, as this party predicted, with a system that all too often ignores and rejects need. Rather than providing through social

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security we are penalising poverty by social insecurity. How come those who tell us that we cannot afford a system of adequate mutual provision for basic welfare are the same people who have told us about the economic miracle and unprecedented prosperity?

Similarly we have already seen the gloss start to peel from the Education Reforms. The failure to confront the socially and educationally unsound division of children at 11, the inequitable, inefficient and inadequate school funding arrangements and over-reliance on testing are all combining to frustrate and confuse parents, overstretch teachers and disillusion children. The school transfer debacle is only a trailer for wider problems which will emerge.

Our role has not been to defend the so-called "dependency culture". It has been to reject the Tory debt-culture with its loans taxing poverty, student loans to tax and prohibit learning, irresponsible credit booms and high mortgage rates to control the damage caused by their

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economic policies.

We make no apologies for proclaiming a dignity culture where welfare is not neglected, self-respect is not insulted and equality of opportunity is provided. We uphold a decency culture where care and proper support for the sick, the old and children are not thrown to the winds of market forces. Of course we do not want to see people abusing the system, but the answer does not lie in having a system that abuses people. Yes, we do believe in achieving value in the public sector but we also believe in preserving values in the public spirit.

In following such an approach we are firmly in the tradition of European social democratic parties. The establishment of just such a party here was a goal of my first manifesto in February 1969. Twenty one years on, in February of this year, when I joined in Berlin with leaders of social democratic and democratic socialist parties from the EC countries, EFTA countries and the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe,

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I was proud that we had achieved that goal. In doing so we have kept true to our purpose and have the respect, support and co-operation of our sister parties.

Together with them we are facing the challenge of creating a new Europe. That challenge includes the creation of democratic policy instruments which can competently address the social, economic and environmental tasks which we share. We recognise that new frameworks and programmes of a much broader scope than the nation state are crucial if we are to hope to have real democratic control or influence over the economic and technological factors which touch the lives of ordinary people. Some spurn this as the dilution of sovereignty, we seek it as the dilation of democracy.

While others are fixated about old concepts of national sovereignty, we are motivated to extend the sovereignty of the peoples of Europe by allowing them to share and shape new democratic alignments, economic responsibilities and social solidarity in ways which also

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recognise and release the regional identities, energies and aspirations which are too often smothered by centralised nation states.

That is the essence of real republicanism - creating structures which ensure that the needs and will of the people prevail, harnessing our common humanity, striving for equality, working in a spirit of peace and allowing each generation to embrace new challenges. Those who remain tied to outmoded and tired concepts, however appropriate for previous generations, are failing the ideals of democracy and of republicanism. Those of us on the real path of progress, rather than the cul-de-sac of prejudice, recognise that advance brings new horizons and will not allow barriers of the past to stop our march towards them.

We commemorate another milestone for the party this weekend. Twenty years ago marked a new beginning in Northern Ireland politics. Twenty years ago the founding of the SDLP saw the reemergence on this part of the island of the

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organised commitment to vigorous democratic pursuit of political goals. We set out to place ourselves within the great tradition of democratic politics which has taken root in so much of Europe and beyond. In this spirit, we set out above all to channel the hopes, the aspirations and the energies of individual men and women who shared a commitment to a better society for all in Northern Ireland.

From the start, our party has sought to foster consensus and to work for solutions based on mutual tolerance and understanding. We pledged ourselves to respect diversity of background and of view in our political approach. We sought a politics of acceptance and reach-out rather than exclusion and rejection. We wanted to escape the narrow sectarian mindset which choked generosity and openness of spirit - qualities we rightly regard as crucial for political progress on this island.

We have kept faith with these ideals over the past twenty years. Despite murder

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and mayhem, dismay and disappointment, in face of triumph and setback we have kept faith in the fundamental decency of the individual human being. We have remained committed to the prevailing power of our common humanity over the forces of death and of destruction which morally and physically stained our society in the past two decades. We have offered no panaceas, no easy and instant solutions to intractable problems. We have held out no vision of some promised land, some Shangri La or Hi Brasil based on deluded dreams and demented notions. Instead, twenty years ago as a new generation we embarked on our journey of both hope and necessity to make a contribution to the political and social life of the North and of the island as a whole. We continue our journey today spurred as before by our common commitment to basic human values. We will not abandon these values: they are the compass and lodestar by which we travel. And we shall overcome.

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Message from An Taoiseach,
Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D.,
to the leader of the SDLP, Mr. John Hume, M.P., M.E.P.,
on the occasion of the 20th Annual Party Conference

16 November, 1990.

Mr. John Hume, M.P., M.E.P.,
Leader,
Social Democratic and Labour Party.

For the past twenty years, the Social Democratic and Labour Party has made an enormous contribution to political life on this island. Throughout those years, your members have shown unrelenting courage and an unwavering commitment to peace, equality and the achievement of a better life for all.

This week marked an important milestone in the Anglo-Irish Agreement - the fifth anniversary of its signature. The Agreement has not only endured but been significantly strengthened over these five years. It has proved its value both at times of crisis in Anglo-Irish relations and also as a mechanism which enables the two Governments to address the full range of issues affecting the daily lives of the people of Northern Ireland. The past five years have been ones of sustained effort and a worthwhile level of achievement; our task is now to build on the foundations which have been established during those years.

In the year immediately gone by, your party - under the dedicated leadership of John Hume with the able assistance of his parliamentary colleagues, Seamus Mallon and Eddie McGrady - has shown its willingness to contribute to the efforts to achieve further political progress. We fully share your readiness to explore all avenues which offer genuine prospects for finding a way forward.

The achievements of the SDLP are not confined to the local or national stage; the Party has also demonstrated a positive and imaginative approach to European integration. That wider perspective is immensely important; we deeply share your hope that, within Europe, it will prove possible to define a better future for all the people of the island.

On behalf of the Government, I salute your record over the past twenty years and express our solidarity and support for your continuing work.

Telefón } (01) 780822
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AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.
Dublin 2.

Mr. G. O'Connell
16.11.90
16.11.90
16.11.90

15 November, 1990.

Mr. Dermot Nally,
Secretary to the Government,
Government Buildings,
Merrion Street,
Dublin 2.

Dear Dermot,

As requested, I am enclosing a draft message from the Taoiseach to the Leader of the SDLP, on the occasion of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the SDLP Party which will be held in the Everglades Hotel, Derry, this coming weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary.

Draft Message from An Taoiseach,
Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D.,
to the leader of the SDLP, Mr. John Hume, M.P., M.E.P.,
on the occasion of the 20th Annual Party Conference

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Amenable -
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C.C. Asst. Sec. Gallagher, Counsellors A-1
Mr. M. Mahon

(Mr. Madel) cc. PSM Mr. Mahon: PSB
Col 77

"a Bill will be introduced to establish new machinery for negotiating the pay and conditions of school teachers in England and Wales."

There will be, in other words, a new salaries Bill. I should like the Government to think hard about one issue. In the teachers' contracts, I should like proper attention to be paid to the fact that many young people could do their homework better at school than at home. Conditions for studying at home are not ideal for many young people. If, however, homework is done at school, teacher supervision will be required. Teachers will therefore have additional work to do. I have discussed it with them locally. They say that in principle it is fine, but that their contracts of service must reflect the fact that they will be carrying out additional supervisory duties at school because homework is being done voluntarily there by some pupils. I hope that that will come about under the new pay machinery.

I hope that there will remain a clear recognition that changing the A-level will be possible one day, but that there is nowhere near enough evidence from the performance at GCSE level to say that we should make that change now. We need more time to see how the results of the GCSE reflect a pupil's ability to go on to A-levels.

The greatest need is to rethink how best to use teachers' time. If we wish to see developments on such a broad front together with quality teaching, we have to create the space in two ways. First, we must reduce teacher load so that there is time to devote to development as well as to lesson preparation, teaching, marking, examining, tutoring and all the extra-curricular activities. We could do that by a limited duration injection of additional resources to create what I would call thinking and planning time within the timetable.

Secondly, we need to increase non-teaching support staff so that teachers do not have to carry out so many routine clerical tasks. There may be a serious shortage of teachers—no doubt we can argue about that—but there is no shortage of support staff. An increase in the number of such staff and better use of teaching time and inevitably, better results in the classroom, more people going on to higher education and a greater standard of living in this country. If we can work out an efficient and effective use of teachers' time with an attractive salary package plus a clear recognition that the local authority sector must always be promoting a sensible balance between efficient school management and a fair allocation of resources, we will see rewards in education and advantages for young people. That will be brought about as a result of the new Bill and the changes in the curriculum.

I would not want this occasion to pass without paying special tribute to my right hon. Friend the new Leader of the House for all he did as Secretary of State for Education and Science. He started to win back teacher support and enthusiasm for discussing with the Government how best to improve the education system.

A fourth term of Conservative Government is perfectly possible. The Christian Democrats in Germany have done it. Dr. Adenauer was returned as Federal Chancellor four times basically by having a policy that steadily increased prosperity and avoided any drastic upheavals. The Opposition certainly cannot guarantee prosperity and there would be plenty of upheavals if they came to power. The choice at the next general election is between

gradualism or upheavalism. The British people know what they would prefer; they must make sure that they get what they want.

7.32 pm

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): I welcome this opportunity to make a brief and limited contribution to the debate. Prior to my being called, my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) asked me whether I intended to speak about Northern Ireland, the middle east or Europe. I said, "Yes." In effect, however it is dressed up or presented, we are talking about the same thing in those three areas of contention.

The hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) made an excellent speech as, he may remember he did last year and the year before. In this type of debate it is essential to raise an issue that is not tied to the big issues being dealt with by everybody else. I commend the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford for the admirable way in which he presented his important case.

I should like to refer to the speech made by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn)—*[Interruption.]* The right hon. Member has just entered the Chamber and I now realise that I have got it wrong. I mean the speech of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen). I know that the right hon. Member for Chesterfield will forgive me for that confusion.

Mr. Winnick: He could sue you.

Mr. Mallon: He certainly could, but I am sure that he will appreciate that it was not done with malice.

I was astounded to hear the speech of the right hon. Member for Devonport. It was the most virulent anti-European speech I have heard for a long time. I wondered on what side of the House I was sitting. Every single word of his speech smacked of a limited appreciation not just of the Britain or Europe in which we live now, but the nature of the world in which we live. I found it astounding and anachronistic that someone with the right hon. Gentleman's experience should have put that on the record in the way that he did and at the time that he did. However, it was followed by a remarkable speech from the hon. Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Mr. Knox). He presented one of the most enlightened and clearest speeches on European membership that I have heard for a long time.

I should like to pursue that line, but, coming from the north of Ireland, it is difficult to do so. I come from probably the most troubled part of Europe and it would be remiss of me not to make some specific points. I tried to do the same last year, as I have every year since coming to the House. It is essential that those of us who represent the north of Ireland should do so within the democratic forum to which we are elected. It is important to ask our colleagues in the House to listen to us. We ask them to agree or disagree with us because that is the essence of democracy and we ask them to look at what is probably the most difficult problem that has been facing Parliament for 21 years. I do not wish to denigrate the importance of the problems in Iraq or Kuwait, the European issue or any of the greater international problems. However, for the past 21 years Parliament has been trying to bring about peace in the north of Ireland. Therefore, although I would dearly love to pursue the debate on the middle east and

Belfast Telegraph - 5/11/70

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Chance missed

THE VICTORY by a Sinn Fein candidate in the Dungannon District Council by-election is a depressing commentary on the divisions in this community. An examination of the facts surrounding the election shows that the only people who can take any comfort from the result are the men of violence. The ballot was called after a Sinn Fein councillor, Martin McCaughey, was disqualified from the council. He was shot dead last month by the security forces and the IRA admitted he had been on "active service". His death was one of 19 last month, many of them carried out by the Provos, including the horrific "human bomb" attacks on security forces installations.

These murders were roundly condemned by constitutional politicians and church leaders. Surely, it was hoped, the vast majority of people would recoil from such barbarism and from those organisations like Sinn Fein which support terrorism. It was a message which evidently did not get through to a sizeable proportion of the electorate in the Torrent ward of Dungannon District Council. Sinn Fein increased its vote on the first count — Francis Molloy obtaining 2524 votes compared to the 2037 cast for the party's three candidates in the local government elections in May last year.

The SDLP also increased its share of the vote, but its candidate was only second after the first count. It reflects poorly on the nationalist community in the area that a candidate from a party which supports violence should gain greater support than one who is a member of a constitutional political party. To exacerbate the position, insufficient Unionist voters were prepared to give second preference to the SDLP candidate to secure his election on the second count. They failed to use the proportional representation voting system to advantage. Could they not see that a vote for the SDLP was, in effect, a vote against Sinn Fein? That, too, is depressing, especially in an area like Dungannon where the constitutional parties have been prepared to rotate power in an arrangement seen as a role model for other councils in the province. The local politicians' maturity and responsibility, sadly, was not reflected by the electorate.

From the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts

cc PSM; Mr. Miller
PSS

MESSAGE FROM SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY
ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY
NOVEMBER 16-17, 1990

It is an honor for me to join in this well-deserved tribute to the Social Democratic and Labor Party on your 20th anniversary.

Throughout the past two decades of civil strife and turmoil in Northern Ireland, the SDLP has dedicated and rededicated itself to ending the violence and achieving a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the conflict.

The success of your Party is a remarkable tribute to the enduring vision of John Hume, Seamus Mallon, Eddie McGrady and your other Party leaders, your dedicated Party members, and the long-suffering people of Northern Ireland who have consistently supported your path toward peace and voted against resort to violence.

Time and again over the past twenty years, the SDLP has demonstrated the wisdom and importance of progress through negotiations and institution-building. You have been at the forefront of every significant initiative to end the festering divisions between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

Throughout these turbulent years, the Party has never lost faith in the belief that a negotiated settlement is the only realistic hope for peace, and that old antagonisms cannot be settled by violence and terrorism. The SDLP's success is inspiring proof, in our own day and generation, of the value of the ancient proverb that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

At a time when the old order is ending and a new order is being born in so many other nations of Europe, it is my hope and prayer that peace and reconciliation will come to Northern Ireland and the Irish nation too, and that the great goals of the DLP will finally be achieved.

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Mr. H. P. Murphy
8-11-90

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SDLP Dinner, Dublin, 6 October 1990

At the annual SDLP fund-raising dinner in Dublin this weekend, Gerry Adams spoke of the current "talks about talks" and stressed the position adopted by his party and Gerry Adams' after-dinner speech to the attendance of 2000 including Minister Michael Woods, Alan Dukes, John Hume, Martin Currie, Noel O'Connell, Michael O'Leary and Michael O'Riordan made the following points:

The SDLP has remained firm on the issue of the issue to be addressed as that of "the Irish people" and the North have foundered on this issue and until that issue is resolved there can be no enduring settlement of the conflict.

While holding to this basic conviction, the party was negotiating flexibility through the day. At the outset, the Unionists established pre-conditions for talks. The SDLP and Dublin went to considerable lengths to meet them on each of these conditions; it was accepted (a) that the 1985 Agreement could be replaced by a new and transparent arrangement; (b) that there could be a series of Conference meetings and (c) while the Conference was meeting, the Secretariat would not be involved in the Conference meetings.

Having achieved satisfaction on each of their pre-conditions, the Unionists then began setting their own conditions. Their next demand was: "We won't talk with Dublin directly at all - we will only agree to talk with a United Kingdom delegation". Then came further variation: "In fact, we won't agree to any talks with Dublin until 'substantial progress' has been made in the internal talks".

*Mr. [unclear]
to SDLP [unclear]*

*Mr. [unclear]
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*John Hume
Thanks for [unclear]
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SDLP Dinner, Dublin, 6 October 1990

*Mr.
H*

At the annual SDLP fund-raising dinner in Dublin this weekend, John Hume spoke of the current "talks about talks" and strongly defended the position adopted by his party and by the Government. In his after-dinner speech to the attendance of about 500 (including Minister Michael Woods, Alan Dukes, John Bruton, Austin Currie, Nora Owen, Ruairi Quinn and Michael McDowell), Hume made the following points: -

- The SDLP has maintained from the outset that the fundamental issue to be addressed is that of "relationships on the island". All previous attempts at internal settlements in the North have foundered on Unionist distrust of Dublin; unless and until that issue is tackled and resolved there can be no enduring settlement of the problem.
- While holding to this basic conviction, the SDLP has shown maximum negotiating flexibility throughout the past months. At the outset, the Unionists established three pre-conditions for talks. The SDLP and Dublin went to considerable lengths to meet them on each of these pre-conditions: it was accepted (a) that the Anglo-Irish Agreement could be replaced by a new and transcending arrangement; (b) that there could be a natural gap between Conference meetings and (c) while the Conference was not meeting, the Secretariat would not be involved in servicing Conference meetings.
- Having achieved satisfaction on each of their original three pre-conditions, the Unionists then began setting further conditions. Their next demand was: "We won't talk to Dublin directly at all - we will only agree to talks if we are part of a United Kingdom delegation". Then came a further variation: "In fact, we won't agree to any sort of talks with Dublin until 'substantial progress' has been made in the internal talks".

- It must be obvious to anyone, Hume argued, that these further pre-conditions could not be acceptable to nationalists. Unionist unwillingness to talk to Dublin except as part of a U.K. delegation was fundamentally at odds with the SDLP view that a solution must be worked out among all Irish people and underpinned by referenda on both sides of the border. Only an outcome arrived at in this way could succeed in permanently removing any vestigial IRA claims to represent the views of Irish people.
- Equally, to attempt to attach a condition to Dublin's entry to the talks process was simply not on. If the Unionists wanted to talk about devolution, they could do so at any time under Article 4 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement - that option was always open to them. But if Unionists insisted that the object of the exercise was to replace the Anglo-Irish Agreement, then Dublin's involvement in the process automatically followed.

In concluding his remarks, Hume referred again to the shared approach of the SDLP and the Government "supported by the other parties in the Dail".

Secretary to the Government

Anglo-Irish Division
8 October, 1990

I was at this dinner but left it to D. Gallagher and A. Anderson to make official even if informal contact. However, I participated briefly in a conversation between Seanan, Mullen and Dermot Gallagher in which Mullen made the point vehemently that he could detect no support for devolution among Northern nationalists even among

cc: PST; PSM; Mr. Nally; PSS; Mr. Mathews; Mr. Brosnan;
Ambassador London, Joint Secretary; Counsellors A-I;
Box

*the more middle-class elements who might be expected to favour it
I, none very favourably of your own intervention at the recent British-Irish Association meeting*

SECRET



*John Hume Library
12/9/90*

*Taoiseach
To see please.*

11/9

[Signature]

*Mr. Lamb
15-57
[Signature]*

Discussion with John Hume,
8th September, 1990

Hume-Adams Talks

1. At Adams' initiative, Hume met the Sinn Fein leader privately on Friday last. Adams had seen the texts of the Hume address to the Merriman Summer School and had been pleased at Hume's remark that he did not "dismiss" the Provisional IRA "as mindless, as criminals, as gangsters" but - and while disagreeing forcefully with their methods - accepted that they "actually believe in what they are doing".

2. Hume told Adams that, responding to the assertion in his Merriman speech that the reasons for the Provo campaign are now out of date, Ambassador Fenn had written to him (Annex 1) and had agreed that it was nonsense to suppose that the British presence in Northern Ireland is due to the defence of economic or strategic interests". Fenn in particular drew attention to paragraphs 21-23 (Annex 2) of his own address to the MacGill Summer School where, inter alia, he argued that the British "have no preconceived blueprint" for the "ultimate destiny" of the North - there was "no secret strategic or economic motivation". (The text went on to say that "whatever view one takes of the past, the present reality is not sensibly seen as a residual colonial problem. To a British diplomat, proud of the way in which, in my lifetime, we have divested ourselves with reasonably good grace of the greatest empire the world has ever known, it seems absurd to see the problem in such terms").

3. Hume made the point that the language in Fenn's speech was in response to his repeated requests to the British to say publicly that they had now no longer any economic or strategic vested interest in remaining in Ireland, and to

his view that this would have a positive impact on the on-going dialogue within the Provos. Hume added that Fenn had informed him that the specific language used in the paragraphs in question had been authorised by the Secretary of State. Hume also gave Adams the (probably misleading) impression that, but for the murder of Ian Gow, Brooke would have found an opportunity to deliver a text along these lines himself. (In relation to the Gow death, Adams rather oddly said that he was worried that "they will kill Thatcher").

Adams Request for Private Paper

4. In the course of a long discussion with Adams, Hume argued in favour of an alternative approach by the Provos - specifically that they would lay down their arms in return for a request from the SDLP to the Government to call a Conference of all parties (including Sinn Fein) on the island; presuming the Unionists would not attend, this Conference would become a forum where all the nationalist parties would work out a common plan/strategy on the basis of which they would seek to convince Unionists of the value of a united Ireland. Hume said Adams seemed interested in considering this approach and asked, in pursuit of it, that Hume let him have a private paper along these lines which he would then put to the IRA. Hume intends working on a paper this week which he will pass to us before deciding whether to take the matter further.

Brooke Initiative

5. Hume expressed himself as being unhappy with Brooke's Ballymena speech and, in particular, with what he saw as too narrow a focus on the establishment of internal arrangements for the North. He believes that his own dialogue with the Provos probably offers a better prospect

of a long-term solution being brought about.

6. He also mentioned that Adams left him with the strong impression that he was genuinely worried that, if by any chance the present initiative succeeded and new arrangements were to be underpinned by joint North-South referenda, as Hume has suggested, this could undermine Provo legitimacy and credibility. However, Adams felt overall that the talks were unlikely to lead anywhere.

Joint Declaration by the two Governments

7. As will be noted from the final paragraph of his letter, Fenn has drawn the attention of the FCO and the NIO to the suggestion by Hume in his Merriman speech that the British and Irish Governments should consider making a joint declaration (modelled on EEC language) which would propose, inter alia, the building of "institutions in Ireland North and South which will respect differences but which will allow the people in both parts of Ireland to work their common ground together and to grow together, like the Europeans, at our own speed". This could be interpreted as meaning that both Governments had declared publicly that they believed ultimately in a united Ireland and were working towards it.

Provos in Derry

8. Hume mentioned to me that he had heard from a reliable source close to the Provo leadership in Derry that they were considering declaring the city a "violence free" area. His own view is that this could be a trap - the Provos are under increasing pressure in Derry through the growth of confidence in, and the economic regeneration of, the city and may be looking for justification to develop their (recently very limited) campaign there. Hume's fear is

that, if the British army remained on the streets after a Provo "violence free" declaration, this could be used by the Provos to put the blame on the British for any new IRA actions. For this reason, Hume will advise the British to be ready to respond positively and sensitively to any Provo declaration along these lines.

Comment on new development in Adams/Hume talks

9. It is difficult to judge how much political weight to attach to the Adams' request for a private paper from Hume. There is no doubt that Hume tends at times to be over optimistic in his assessment and to lack a sense of perspective about developments in which he has been involved. Additionally, one would have to be conscious of any implications for the Brooke initiative (including the risk that - if we were to go down the road suggested by Hume - the prospect of drawing Unionists into dialogue might be endangered).
10. Nevertheless, the Adams' request comes at a time when we have had consistent signals from reliable sources in the North (including Bishop Cathal Daly, Fr. Wallace in West Belfast and the Catholic and Church of Ireland Chaplains at the Maze) that the Provos are beginning to look fundamentally at the continuation of their campaign of violence and the prospects for opting into the political process. When I saw him in late July, Bishop Daly said that, while he recognised the "immense moral dilemma" of any contact with Sinn Fein and the IRA, it would be regrettable if the present feelers from this quarter were left unanswered.
11. At the least, there would seem to be no reason why the paper Hume is drafting should not be looked at seriously and, together with him, the potential of the development assessed. It would, of course, be an immensely significant

step if the Provos were to consider that their aspirations and objectives could be accommodated through the changing political process - change which is being brought about by, inter alia, the signals of "neutrality" on the North's future emerging from London (e.g. in the Fenn speech to MacGill), the levelling of the North's political playing pitch through the role of the Government in representing nationalists via the Anglo-Irish process and by the wider development towards political and economic unity within the European Community.

DPT

Dermot Gallagher,
10 September, 1990.

cc: PST; PSM; Mr. Nally; PSS; Ms. Anderson.

From: Sir Nicholas Fenn KCMG, HM Ambassador



ANNEX 1

BRITISH EMBASSY,
DUBLIN.

28 August 1990

John Hume Esq MP MEP
5 Bayview Terrace
LONDONDERRY

Dear John,

It was good to see you again at Lahinch last week and to witness in person the important speech which you delivered to the Merriman Summer School. As I explained at the time, I do not agree with every word in it, (In particular the changes to which you referred are not in my view due "entirely" to developments in the European Community). But I welcome and applaud the trenchant arguments you addressed to the IRA and endorse your view that - whatever may have been the case in the past - it is nonsense to suppose that the British presence in Northern Ireland is due to the defence of economic or strategic interests.

As I promised, I venture to enclose a copy of the speech I contributed to the MacGill Summer School at Glenties on 15 August. The immediately relevant passage is "the underlying reality" at paragraphs 21-23. But you might find some interest in the second half of the speech beginning at paragraph 14.

I have lost no time in reporting your speech to the FCO and the NIO, drawing their attention not only to your appeal to the IRA to lay down their arms but also to your suggestion for a joint declaration by the two Governments. As I warned you, Mr Brooke is away this week and part of next but I have told his office to expect a call from you.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Fenn

E. UNDERLYING REALITY

21. There are two underlying political realities:

a. The first is that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom in British and International Law, and will remain so unless and until a majority of its people decide otherwise.

b. The second is that, whatever emerges from present uncertainties, there can be no return to the dictatorship of the majority which for fifty years was called democracy. Neither community in Northern Ireland can impose its will on the other.

22. The British Government have views of their own about Northern Ireland. But they have no preconceived blueprint for its ultimate destiny. There is no secret strategic or economic motivation. Whatever view one takes of the past, the present reality is not sensibly seen as a residual colonial problem. To a British diplomat, proud of the way in which, in my lifetime, we have divested ourselves with reasonably good grace of the greatest empire the world has ever known, it seems absurd to see the problem in such terms. The issue is not something called "the British presence in the north of Ireland". We are not talking about real estate, but about people: one million Irishmen profoundly alienated from the Republic and determined to be British. A secure future cannot be built upon fantasy. Northern Ireland remains British because that is the declared and continuing desire of a majority of its people. They will not be betrayed.

23. Article 1 of the Agreement commits both governments to a crucial formula: the principle of consent: the two Governments affirm that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland". As Mr Tom King used to observe, this means self-determination for the people of Northern Ireland.

SDLP

McGrady
10.9.90

10/9

Meeting with Eddie McGrady

DST; PSU
M. Mally; PIR
Rox

6 September 1990

1. The discussion with McGrady covered a range of topics (including security issues, fair employment, local government reform) which are being reported on separately; the main item on which he wished to dwell, however, was the state of play with regard to the Brooke initiative.

2. McGrady is concerned that the momentum for talks should not falter and, in particular, that the initiative should not fail through misunderstanding or confusion. He argues that unless we succeed on this occasion in "weaning the Unionists away from Westminster", the opportunity is unlikely to present itself again for some considerable time. The SDLP as a whole, he says, has no coherent view on whether or not it wants talks to take place; he maintains that the party is making a fundamental mistake in not adopting a more positive approach - a basic point which has to be recognised, he argues, is that valuable as the Anglo-Irish Agreement is, a Dublin-Belfast nexus has to be established if a united Ireland is ever to be achieved.

3. With regard to the current state of play, among the points McGrady made were:
 - The various NIO texts, including the latest version of 16 July, have all been seriously unbalanced; there is a clear attempt to reach out to Unionists without an equivalent appreciation of nationalist sensitivities. He concludes that the drafting exercise cannot be left to the British - the Hume text, or something modelled on it, should be the basis for future work.

- He feels particularly strongly about the suggestion that Unionists should participate in North-South talks as part of a U.K. delegation. His concern here, however, seems not so much how Unionists might wish to describe themselves but the risk that the SDLP too might be seen as participating to some extent "under the Brooke umbrella". He argues that the essential nature of the North-South talks as between Dublin and the Northern Ireland parties must be safeguarded insofar as possible.

- He feels there is considerable confusion surrounding the question of "substantial progress" being achieved in the internal talks before North/South talks begin. McGrady is convinced that the Unionists do in fact see themselves as talking to Dublin within weeks of the commencement of the gap; he says, however, that there is a continuing Unionist fear that Dublin wants to dictate the shape of internal structures in Northern Ireland. [We discussed this at some length; McGrady said that the Unionists have not properly grasped the concept that the three strands of discussion would continue in parallel (i.e. without direct Dublin participation in the first strand); the Unionist sense is that, from the date that North-South talks begin, Dublin will insist on being fully involved in all elements of the discussion; hence the stubbornness of their insistence on "substantial progress" being achieved before the commencement of North-South talks].

- 4. McGrady is not convinced of the argument that an early breakdown in substantive talks would have more damaging consequences than a failure to get the talks off the ground. "It is better to try and fail than to fail to try". He

maintains that the SDLP always has the option of pulling out of the talks if Unionists should refuse to move to the North-South phase. (In response to my query about the political fall-out for the SDLP of taking such a step, McGrady was adamant that the party would be prepared to weather the inevitable criticisms - there would certainly be understanding at grass-roots level if the party leadership felt obliged to take such a step).

5. Finally, McGrady, mentioned that he had received a "letter of apology" from Bishop Cahal Daly regarding the Bishops remarks in July which had been widely interpreted by the media as an implicit criticism of the SDLP (and indeed of Dublin). McGrady said, rather sourly, that he had been tempted to write back to the effect that if the Bishop was unable to anticipate the political fall-out of his remarks, he would be better off staying out of politics.

A.A.

A. Anderson

7 September, 1990

c. c. Mr. Gallagher, Joint Secretary, Counsellors A. I., Box.

SECRET

Meetings with Hume and Mallon,
15th and 16th June, 1990

No 21
Wm by c [unclear] 19/6/90
19/6

1. I met John Hume and Séamus Mallon (separately) in the North over the weekend.

SDLP Meeting with Secretary of State, 15th June

2. The crunch issue at the meeting between the SDLP (Hume and Mallon) and the Secretary of State in London was, as anticipated, the timing of North-South talks. Brooke (who was accompanied by Mawhinney, Blelloch, Burns and McConnell) argued that, while all sides had to know the general framework for the talks, he believed that the drawing up of a timetable for them would be "very restricting". In response to a Hume question, Brooke accepted that there was as yet no agreement between Dublin and London on either the framework or the timetable for talks.
3. Brooke went on to ask Hume for the SDLP position on the timetable issue. In response, both Hume and Mallon argued strongly that a precise timetable should be established before talks got underway. They both affirmed, in response to a direct question, that the SDLP did not want to get into talks until the framework and timetable had been laid down. Brooke then asked if it was an SDLP "pre-condition" to have the natural gap "parcelled out in terms of a timetable", while Mawhinney - making his only intervention - argued that a strict timetable could only inhibit and hinder progress.

Draft Statement by Secretary of State

4. The Secretary of State then handed over to the SDLP a copy of the draft statement (Annex 1) he would hope to make in

the Commons in early July on the framework of the talks and asked for the party's views on it. This is the same text which Brooke gave to the Minister at their meeting in London on the 11th June and which we found quite unacceptable. In reply to Hume's question about our attitude to the text, Burns said that we had "reservations" about it.

5. The meeting concluded with Brooke asking Hume to let him have a considered view of the terms of the draft statement as soon as possible. Hume agreed to come back to him "within a few days".
6. When we met on Saturday, Hume asked for our views on whether his response should be orally or in writing, and the terms in which he might reply (there will be a separate note/recommendation on this).

Liaison Group

7. The meeting also discussed the format of the Liaison Group. Burns initially gave the SDLP to understand that the two Governments had now agreed that the Group would be private and intergovernmental but, under pressure from Mallon, the British side accepted that no agreement had as yet been reached between us. Brooke, however, made the point that he would be astonished if, all else being agreed, there was to be a problem at the end of the day about the Liaison Group.

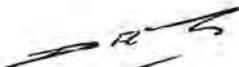
Co-ordination with Dublin

8. During our discussion, Mallon made the point forcefully that there needed to be the closest co-ordination between Dublin and the SDLP as the talks progressed. It would be in the British interest to try and divide us or at least to prevent us taking up united positions on issues. In his view, it

was crucial that there be a very early discussion between Dublin and the SDLP - on the basis of papers - on the agenda and content of talks.

Socialist Group Statement

9. Hume also referred to the resolution on possible political progress in Ireland passed by the Socialist Group at their recent meeting in Dublin (Annex 2) and - very tentatively - suggested that the Taoiseach might wish to give consideration - if he thought it appropriate - to a statement along analogous lines from the Dublin Summit which would welcome the efforts by the two Governments and the political parties in the North to try and advance political progress.



Dermot Gallagher,
18 June, 1990.

cc: PST; PSM; Mr. Nally; PSS; Ambassador London;
Mr. Mathews; Mr. Brosnan; Joint Secretary; Ms. Anderson.

TEXT FOR INCLUSION IN A STATEMENT BY MR BROOKE

"It is because the Northern Ireland parties all look, as I do, to address each of the three relationships that the talks I have described will necessarily involve discussions between the Northern Ireland parties, discussions involving the Northern Ireland parties and the Government of the Republic of Ireland; and discussions between the two Governments. These discussions may not necessarily start at the same time. But if real progress is to be made, it will be necessary to get all three sets of discussions under way at an early date and if an agreement satisfactory to all is to be reached on the three relationships, then discussions will need to proceed in parallel, and to conclude simultaneously".

"The British Government will maintain contact with the Irish Government from the outset of the process on all matters of concern to them. The participants in the talks on future political arrangements in Northern Ireland will be the British Government and the Northern Ireland political parties. Talks on future relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic, in which the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland political parties will participate, will begin as soon as sufficient progress has been made in the internal talks to make this worthwhile. It would not be right to try to force these talks into some straitjacket of timing. It is important to recognise that they are an organic process. But, taking account of that, and given the parties' constructive approach, I am confident that this point will be reached quickly. And the two Governments will be in constant touch about any implications for the Agreement proposed arrangements may have or about suggestions for an alternative to the Agreement".



Confederation of Socialist Parties of the EC Leaders' Meeting



Dublin 1990

Dublin, 5th June 1990

LEADERS' DECLARATION ON THE SITUATION IN IRELAND

Meeting in Dublin, we would express our hope that membership of the Community will make its own contribution to a healing process within Ireland itself, since the common interests of both parts of Ireland which exist within the emerging Single market far outweigh their differences.

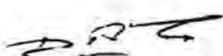
In particular, we would hope that the British and Irish Governments and their peoples would follow the example of the European Community in laying aside the past and in building institutions in Ireland which respect difference and diversity, and which permit the people of Ireland to work together for an Ireland, North and South, where everyone can earn a living and grow together, in peace, at their own speed.

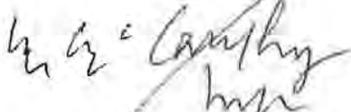
S E C R E T

NOTE

Hume's efforts to encourage Sinn Féin dialogue

1. In order to give a new impetus to the internal Sinn Féin debate, John Hume has had as an objective for some time to convince the Secretary of State that he should - to quote Hume's recent Sunday Independent article - "directly address their own (i.e. Sinn Fein's) stated reasons for what they call armed struggle and demonstrate that those reasons no longer exist". Hume would, therefore, like to see the Secretary of State take an early opportunity to put on the record that the British have no longer any diplomatic, security, military, economic or financial vested interest in staying in Northern Ireland and that the issue of self-determination is one on which the Irish people themselves must seek to reach agreement.
2. Hume recently drafted a text (Annex 1 attached) which he has passed to the NIO and asked that it be considered as a basis for the suggested speech by the Secretary of State. He has also handed over to the NIO a text which he has received from a source who has sought to interpret Sinn Fein thinking on this issue and who is working with Hume in trying to advance the dialogue within Sinn Fein (Annex 2).
3. The limited indication we have to date suggests that the British remain very cautious and circumspect about the Hume approach.


Dermot Gallagher,
28 May, 1990.


30/5

30-5-90

Annex 1.

Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA have repeatedly stated that their objective is a united Ireland without a British presence, and have argued that it can only be achieved by force. One of the reasons for this advanced by their spokesmen is that Britain has some interest of her own in staying in Northern Ireland and is therefore engaged in some way in defending those interests by force and by military strength.

Britain of course has an interest in Northern Ireland which is to respond with warm goodwill and friendship to the needs of the people of Northern Ireland as a whole. (We respect and admire the contribution which they have made to the Union in peace and war.) But let me be very clear! In the second half of the 20th Century, no matter what has been the position in the past, the British Government has no political, military, strategic or economic interest in staying in Ireland or in the exercise of authority there that could transcend respect for the wishes of the majority in Northern Ireland. If the people were freely to decide that they wished to unite with the South then not only would the British Government not stand in the way, they would facilitate and legislate for the change.

What that means in clear terms is that Irish unity is a matter for Irish people and for no one else. If those Irish people who want unity can persuade those who do not, Why should a British Government stand in the way? That being the case, the question asked by most British people is, What is the possible justification for the use of force in such circumstances? I now ask the same question.

We also hear calls from time to time, calls for round-table conferences involving elected representatives of the Irish people, North and South, to discuss the future and future relationships between the people of Ireland. It seems to us at the present time that agreement on such a conference is extremely unlikely, but if it were the British Government would not stand in the way. Indeed, we would give it our encouragement.

In the meantime and in the absence of agreement on all these matters, the British Government continues and will continue to exercise its responsibilities in Northern Ireland and to do our best to ensure peace, stability and some measure of economic prosperity there. We would only wish that all the people and parties there would give us their full co-operation in achieving these objectives.

The Provisional I.R.A say that they are fighting a "War of Independence" to win the freedom of self-determination for the people of Ireland. They maintain that force must be used to persuade the British Government to acknowledge such a freedom because it has a "colonial" self-interest in remaining in Northern Ireland and in exercising authority there.

This interpretation of the political situation in Northern Ireland is based on the false assumption that Britain has some interest of her own in remaining there and is, therefore, engaged, in some way, in defending those interests by force and military strength.

Britain, of course, has an interest in Northern Ireland which is to respond with warm good-will and friendship to the needs of the people of Northern Ireland as a whole. (We respect and admire the contribution which they have made to the Union in peace and war.) But let me be very clear! In the second half of the 20th century, no matter what has been the position in the past, the British Government has no political, military, strategic, or economic interest in staying in Ireland or in the exercise of authority there that could transcend respect for the wishes of the majority in Northern Ireland.

The political and security situation, as it has now developed in Northern Ireland, is due to the historical, political, religious and cultural divisions which separate the people of the Nationalist tradition from the people of the Unionist tradition in Ireland. These divisions are at the root of the conflict there and not any self-interested, dominion policies of the British Government.

The central issue in the conflict, therefore, is not to persuade the British Government to decide on the question of self-determination in Ireland but to bridge the divisions between the people of both traditions there in a way that will enable them to decide it, freely and democratically, for themselves.

The political consensus and agreement which would bridge these traditional divisions and so open the way to a peaceful resolution of the question of Irish self-determination, can only be achieved through the processes of political debate and dialogue between the people of both traditions.

Should they, through their political representatives, agree to engage in such dialogue, the British Government would do everything possible to accommodate and facilitate it. It would, for example, provide the necessary frame-work and forum which could take the form of an on-going Conference or Convention composed of the official representatives of the people of both traditions. It would confine its own role in such a dialogue to that of facilitator and so would not officially take part in it or much less, seek, in any way, to dictate to it.

This means that the British Government is prepared to withdraw from the central area of historical, political, religious and cultural conflict and from the

central forum of political debate that would seek to resolve it, so that the parties to the conflict, namely, the people of the Nationalist Tradition and the people of the Unionist Tradition, could engage, freely, independently and democratically in the political dialogue and agreement-making which would bridge their divisions.

Should this dialogue result in agreements, based on the consent of the people of the two traditions, which would bridge the political divisions between them and define the forms of new political structures which would embody, institute and organise such agreements, the British Government would respond with the necessary legislation.

Related

The British government is also prepared to encourage any dialogue among Nationalist and Republican representatives which would seek to replace violence by a new and purely political strategy for achieving their democratic aims.

Note: It is better to say "the Provisional I.R.A. are fighting a "war of Independence" to win the freedom of self-determination for the people of Ireland (as in document 2) rather than that their objective is a united Ireland. Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. make a distinction between the political objective of a 32 County Republic and the military objective of winning the ^{exercise} ~~right to~~ of what they see as the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

Department of the Taoiseach.

To be dealt with **IMMEDIATELY** and not placed with other papers.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

To be answered on: Wednesday, 23rd May, 1990.

Regd. No. Put down by:— Deputy Proinsias De Rossa.

Question

To ask the Taoiseach if he will outline the matters discussed with the delegation from the SDLP at their meeting on 11 May, 1990; if the current prospects for political progress in Northern Ireland and movement towards democratic devolved government were discussed; if he has had any report from the British Government on the meeting which took place on the same day between the Northern Ireland Secretary and the leaders of the Official Unionist and Democratic Unionist parties; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

6

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Mr. Mc Carthy | 22/5/90 |
| Mr. Waddy | 22/5 |
| Taoiseach | 22/5 |
| M. Keenan | 26/5 |
| Mr. B. W. Conboy | 26.5.90 |

Date 23 May 1990Vol 399 No 1 Cols 71-73**Discussions on Northern Ireland.**

5. **Proinsias De Rossa** asked the Taoiseach if he has received a request for a meeting from Christopher McGimpsey, Honorary Secretary of the Ulster Unionist Party; if he intends to meet with Mr. McGimpsey; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

The Taoiseach: I have indicated on many occasions my willingness to meet, without preconditions, representatives of the Unionist tradition to hear their concerns at first hand. In line with this policy, I will, of course, respond favourably to the request referred to by the Deputy which, I understand, is to be made shortly.

Proinsias De Rossa: Can I take it, therefore, that a request for a meeting has not arrived on the Taoiseach's desk?

The Taoiseach: I do not like to give details of personal correspondence of that kind but when it is necessary, I will convey the information to the House.

Dr. G. FitzGerald: I hope the Taoiseach will not be excluding any subject from the agenda in a manner that might make it difficult for talks to take place.

6. **Proinsias De Rossa** asked the Taoiseach if he will outline the matters discussed with the delegation from the SDLP at their meeting on 11 May 1990; if the current prospects for political progress in Northern Ireland and movement towards democratic devolved Government were discussed; if he has had any report from the British Government on the meeting which took place on the same day between the Northern Ireland Secretary and the leaders of the Official Unionist and Democratic Unionist parties; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

The Taoiseach: The Government and the SDLP meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern relating to Northern Ireland; at the

meeting on 11 May, a range of issues — including the prospects for political progress — was discussed. It will be appreciated that details of such discussions are confidential.

The meeting between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the leaders of the UUP and DUP on 11 May took place in the context of continuing efforts to get a process of political dialogue underway; there is close contact between the two Governments on all aspects of this process. Of course, as the Deputy knows a further meeting took place in London yesterday.

Proinsias De Rossa: At the meeting with the SDLP can I take it that there was some coming together on common ideas in relation to progress in Northern Ireland during the series of talks that have just ended? Do the talks with the SDLP meet in any way the developments that have taken place in the past 24 hours with the Unionist parties?

The Taoiseach: I do not understand the import of the Deputy's question but I would like to repeat what I said here on a previous occasion, these talks and discussions are at a particularly sensitive stage. Indeed we should all agree, indeed I thought we had all agreed, that we would refrain from any comments that might in any way be other than constructive.

Proinsias De Rossa: A Cheann Comhairle, may I respond to that point? The Taoiseach will find it difficult to find comments from me in this House on this matter that could be regarded in any way as being non constructive. Can the Taoiseach tell the House that no decisions have been reached between himself, the Government and the SDLP that would in any way be an obstacle to the current optimistic progress that is taking place?

The Taoiseach: I do not think that anybody on this side or on the SDLP side would wish to be obstructive in any way.

Mr. J. Bruton: Without casting any

aspersions on the ability of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to report to him on the content of his discussions with the Unionist representatives. would the Taoiseach agree that this indirect form of contact is no substitute for face to face discussion? I ask the Taoiseach to use all the ingenuity both constitutional and diplomatic available to him to clear away whatever obstacles exist to direct contact between himself and representatives of his Government with representatives of the Unionists?

The Taoiseach: I had thought I had done everything I could in that regard.

Mr. J. Bruton: One hopes that what the Taoiseach has done so far will prove fruitful but there have been so many disappointments in the past that the Taoiseach might agree that one can never be sure that one has established such a channel until it is firmly in place. May I, therefore, ask the Taoiseach to continue to use whatever ingenuity is available to him in terms of the interpretation of existing agreements and so forth to ensure that an open channel is permanently established between himself and the Unionists in view of the fact that this was the normal practice in the past and one needs to restore it?

The Taoiseach: I have already assured the House that the Government are doing everything they can to facilitate the process of discussion.

Proinsias De Rossa: In view of the sensitivity of the issues concerned and the talks that are in progress, may I ask the Taoiseach to take the opportunity to brief the parties in this House on the progress to date? This would perhaps avoid the necessity to put questions in the House on this matter at this sensitive time?

An Ceann Comhairle: The questions we are coming to deal with now are questions nominated for priority, to which a rigid time limit applies.

Industrial Disputes.

7. **Mr. J. Mitchell** asked the Minister for Labour the number of man days lost due to industrial disputes for the four month period January to April 1990: the figures for the preceding four months: and the figures for the first four months of 1988 and 1989.

Minister for Labour (Mr. B. Ahern): My Department estimate that the number of days lost for the periods in question are as follows: January-April 1990, 69,698; September-December 1989, 11,998; January-April 1989, 12,020; and January-April 1988, 78,067.

As a commentary on these figures it is clear that they are worse than for the same period in 1989 but better than the same period in 1988. I believe there were exceptional circumstances in the period in that almost 90 per cent of the days lost were accounted for by four disputes — Waterford, Barlo, Anglo Irish Beef Processors and Liebert. In general terms and bearing in mind these four disputes the figures are a distinct improvement on 1987 and 1986 in which 129,000 and 137,000 days were lost in the first three months. Even these years, however, were an improvement on the strike-prone sixties and seventies.

Mr. J. Mitchell: Does the Minister share my concern that these figures may represent a resurgence of expectations which may lead — bearing in mind other factors on the industrial relations front — to an upsurge in industrial disputes? If so, is the Minister prepared to engage in discussions with the social partners now rather than waiting until the *Programme for National Recovery* in order to bring the matter under control at this stage?

Mr. B. Ahern: I do not disagree with anything the Deputy has said. Last night I spoke at the national conference of the Federation of Irish Employers. I have already spoken at more than 30 annual conferences in the past six weeks and my message at these conferences has been

DÁIL QUESTION addressed to the Taoiseach
by Deputy Proinsias De Rossa for answer on
Wednesday 23rd May 1990.

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REPLY:

The Government and the SDLP meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern relating to Northern Ireland; at the meeting on 11th May, a range of issues - including the prospects for political progress - was discussed. It will be appreciated that details of such discussions are confidential.

The meeting between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the leaders of the UUP and DUP on 11th May took place in the context of continuing efforts to get a process of political dialogue underway; there is close contact between the two Governments on all aspects of this process.

Note for Taoiseach's Information

1. At the last meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, on 19 April, there was an understanding that the Irish Government would brief the S.D.L.P. on discussions to date at around the same time as the Northern Secretary would meet the Unionists. Both meetings took place on Friday 11th May. Mr. Brooke is meeting the Unionist leaders again on 22 May. (See newspaper reports.)

The S.D.L.P. delegation, consisted of Mr. Hume, Mr. Mallon, Mr. McGrady and Dr. Hendron. The Taoiseach was accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. No statement was issued after the meeting.

2. In the event of supplementary questions being asked the Taoiseach might wish to draw on his reply to Private Notice Questions in the House on 8th May, relating to the Government's attitude to the Secretary of State's talks with Unionists. An extract from the Dáil report is beneath.
4. Relevant newspaper reports are attached.

Extract from Dáil Debates
of 8th May, 1990

Private Notice Questions.

Talks on Northern Ireland.

An Ceann Comhairle: First, I am taking the question addressed to the Taoiseach in the name of Deputy Peter Barry.

Mr. Barry asked the Taoiseach, in view of the proposed meetings between the unionist parties in the North and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if it is the Government's intention to agree to a suspension of the Anglo-Irish Conference or the removal of the Secretariat from Maryfield.

Mr. Spring asked the Taoiseach if he has been consulted regarding the proposed talks between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and unionist leaders; and the concessions his Government are prepared to make to ensure progress in those discussions.

The Taoiseach: With your permission, Sir, I propose to take both questions together. We have, of course, been consulted about these talks and in the interest of securing progress have been as helpful as we can in regard to them. I can assure

[The Taoiseach.]
Deputies that the suspension of the Conference and the removal of the Secretariat are not in question. However, it is important for all concerned, with a view to being constructive, to be careful about what is said on the subject at this time, when active efforts are being made to get a process of dialogue going.

Mr. Barry: I thank the Taoiseach for his reply and I accept his view on the necessity to be careful about the words we use. Would he agree that it is not helpful that additional blocks are put in place any time slight progress is made along the road by way of additional conditions under which certain people may take part in talks?

The Taoiseach: I think we should all concentrate on endeavouring to remove barriers and blocks, and indeed that is the spirit that prevails throughout Europe at present.

Mr. Spring: As it has never been claimed that the Anglo-Irish Agreement was an end in itself or a final agreement, and all sides appear to be saying that something better can be put in its place, can I ask the Taoiseach if at this point he accepts that there are obstacles preventing the unionists coming to talks and if he and the Government are prepared to take some steps to remove those obstacles?

The Taoiseach: First of all, the Deputy will know that I have said in this House on a number of occasions that the Government are committed to continuing to work the agreement fully until it is transcended by a new and more comprehensive arrangement. The answer to the Deputy is inherent in my reply in which I said that we have, of course, been consulted about the talks and, in the interests of securing progress, we have been as helpful as we can. I think the Deputy will know what I mean by that.

Mr. Spring: In relation to the Taoiseach's statement that he wants to be as

helpful as he possibly can, would he not accept that at this time the Irish Government should agree to a suspension of the Anglo-Irish Secretariat for a pre-determined time to allow talks to get under way and, in the event of those talks failing, that the agreement would be recommenced at a fixed time?

The Taoiseach: No, I could not give any such commitment at this stage.

Proinsias De Rossa: Bearing in mind, as the Taoiseach has said, the need for sensitivity in the current situation, would he acknowledge that the requirement by the unionist parties for the suspension of the conferences and the removal of the Maryfield Secretariat is not a new requirement; it is not a requirement which they have announced recently but has been one of their conditions for some considerable time? Would the Taoiseach indicate that it is a question on which the door is not closed but is one that can be considered at some future time?

The Taoiseach: I have advised the Deputy before that I do not think he should take upon himself the role of interpreting to me the wishes of the unionists. I have time and again asked that they would convey these concerns to myself.

Mr. Dukes: Would the Taoiseach agree that the statement made by him and by others in this House and a similar statement made by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to the effect that the two Governments are prepared to contemplate the possibility of another agreement which, in the Taoiseach's own words, would transcend the present agreement is not in itself a very substantial political move which would be recognised by the other parties to these talks as being a very clear earnest of the constructive intention of all the parties concerned?

The Taoiseach: I think it is a very clear indication of our respective positions and, as I read the newspapers, it has

been welcomed as such by the unionist representatives.

An Ceann Comhairle: A final question. There are a number of Private Notice Questions to be dealt with today.

Mr. Spring: Given the position outlined by the Taoiseach which amounts to a negative response to the request made by unionist leaders at the weekend, is he now confident that the talks will take place between the unionist leaders and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in those circumstances?

The Taoiseach: I hope they will. I would certainly rebut any suggestion of a negative attitude on our part. As I have said in my reply, and I would like to reiterate it, in the interests of securing progress we have been as helpful as we can.

Mr. Currie: Would the Taoiseach accept that the political movement we are currently witnessing in Northern Ireland is of such a fragile and sensitive nature that it has to be very carefully nurtured and that all of us in this House should be extremely careful in what we have to say in relation to it because while there are some people in Northern Ireland who are prepared to put their political necks on the line in order to find political accommodation, there are others clearly who would like nothing better than something said in this House or outside it, in the Republic, which could be used as an excuse for breaking off discussions? Would the Taoiseach agree that in those circumstances it is incumbent on all of us who desperately wish to see political progress in Northern Ireland to be acutely sensitive and conscious of these considerations?

The Taoiseach: That is exactly what I said in my reply.

~~B & I Dispute.~~

Mr. Spring and Mr. T. O'Sullivan

asked the Minister for Labour the steps he is taking to ensure a quick resolution of the dispute which is disrupting B & I sailings.

Minister of State at the Department of Industry and Commerce (Mr. Leyden): I apologise for the absence of the Minister for Labour who is in Brussels on official Government business. The dispute which has been simmering for sometime came to a head on Saturday, 5 May 1990. Ratings on the freight ship, *M.V. Bison*, refused to carry out certain duties. The company decided that in these circumstances it was not possible to run the service efficiently and, therefore, removed the crew involved from the payroll and cancelled the sailing. The crew involved are members of the Seamen's Union of Ireland.

On Monday, 7 May the dispute escalated when crew members on other B & I freight and passenger ships took action in support of their suspended colleagues on the *M.V. Bison*. As a result of this action, B & I have suspended all sailings for the time being. Initially the action was unofficial but the Seamen's Union of Ireland have now made the dispute official. There have been two Labour Court conciliation conferences on the dispute and a further conciliation conference has been arranged for this afternoon. As I speak, talks are already under way which, I hope, will lead to a resolution of the dispute.

Mr. Spring: Given the enormous difficulties caused by the disruption in the services of the B & I, I welcome the statement by the Minister that further talks are in train. Can I ask the Minister if he, acting for the Minister for Labour, intends to take a personal role in bringing about a resolution?

Mr. Leyden: In the circumstances we would assist in the resolution of this dispute by adopting a restrained approach. This dispute, of course, has very serious implications for passengers and cargo and we should appeal to both sides to come to an agreed settlement as quickly as

***Newspaper
article(s)/cutting(s)
have not been copied***

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Taoiseach

22/5

Mr. Naughton
suggested reply.

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5 **To ask the Taoiseach if he will outline the matters discussed with the delegation from the SDLP at their meeting on 11th May, 1990; if the current prospects for political progress in Northern Ireland and movement towards democratic devolved government were discussed; if he has had any report from the British Government on the meeting which took place on the same day between the Northern Ireland Secretary and the leaders of the Official Unionist and Democratic Unionist parties; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**-Proinsias De Rossa.
For ORAL answer on Wednesday 23rd May, 1990.

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