

2020/17/17

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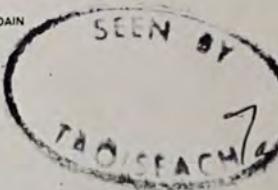
Northern Ireland
Relations with
Alliance Party

S19015C

START of file



SEEN BY



8-10-90

17 Grosvenor Place,
London SW1X 7HR.

cc PERT; PES
 Mr. Webb; PES
 Mr. Matthew; Mr. Dunn
 Caroline H/
 PERT

Confidential

25 September, 1990.

To: Mr. P.
 An
 26/9
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Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
 Assistant Secretary,
 Department of Foreign Affairs,
 Dublin.

Conversation with Dr. John Alderdice

Dear Assistant Secretary,

John Alderdice and Pat Cox MEP were the principal Irish guests at the Liberal Democrat Conference. Together with Paddy Ashdown they addressed the well attended fringe meeting on European Integration and Irish affairs on 17 September - Mr. Donoghue's report of today's date refers. During our stay in Blackpool Mr. Donoghue and I had a number of private conversations with Dr. Alderdice and the following is a summary of the main points of interest which arose.

Meeting with the Taoiseach on 5 September

The meeting, he told us, had been "very useful". He had wanted to reassure himself as to the nature of the differences which had arisen in early July, bringing the Brooke initiative to a standstill. He had come away from the meeting satisfied that the differences had arisen essentially because of misunderstandings.

Prospects for talks

"The ball", he said, "was still just about in play". In his view the DUP are serious about talks. Both Robinson and Paisley recognise that talks about devolution are the only means of achieving an alternative to the Agreement. It is another question as to whether they have thought through their position to the point where they would contemplate power-sharing. Molyneaux, he contended, will try to keep out of talks as long as possible. His personality is such however that, if forced finally into talks, he might prove more amenable to pressure than his intransigent public position would suggest. Alderdice dwelt on Molyneaux's essentially timid personality and mentioned specifically that he is afraid of John Hume.

John Taylor and Martin Smyth, he characterised, as fundamentally devolutionist in their approach. Neither, however, is putting pressure on Molyneaux and they will not challenge him for the leadership. Nonetheless, they do not want to spend the rest of their days as backbenchers at Westminster. If Taylor applied the necessary pressure, it would be difficult for Molyneaux to resist. Timing, he stressed, is of the essence. One cannot keep a negotiating process like this going indefinitely without losing momentum. In addition, he speculated that by the end of the year the Northern Ireland parties might begin to focus on the next Westminster election.

Alliance perspective on talks

He suggested that the following would be a realistic scenario and implied that Peter Brooke is thinking along similar lines:

- as a first step, the two Governments reach an understanding in relation to the three basic Unionist preconditions;
- the question of timing and format for the Irish Government's involvement in the talks is left to one side temporarily. The Secretary of State convenes informal discussions with the leaders of the four Northern Ireland parties with a view to exploring the scope for agreement on the substance which the proposed formal talks would address. This informal conference, which might last for three or four weeks would seek in addition to promote a favourable atmosphere for the formal talks. If such an atmosphere cannot be achieved, Alderdice sees no point in proceeding any further with the initiative;
- If on the other hand some broad understanding on the substance of the formal talks can be achieved, the next stage would be for the informal conference to be broadened in some way, perhaps through informal contacts, in order to bring in the Irish Government;
- on the assumption that all outstanding issues (including that of the Irish Government's involvement) can be resolved in these informal talks, the stage would then be set for the formal talks to commence.

Alliance attitude towards the Unionists

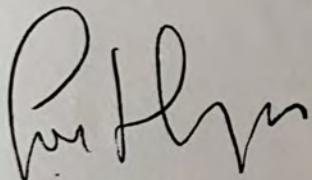
When we recalled some of the Irish Government's concerns in relation to the talks, Alderdice told us in robust terms that Alliance would not stand for any attempt by the Unionists to renege on any agreement reached about the Irish Government's involvement. He supported this with references to courageous positions taken by Alliance in the past viz-a-viz the Unionists. His view, however, was that once engaged in the process, the Unionists would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to block Dublin's entry to the talks while at the same time preserving their own political credibility.

"The Unionists would be finished if they tried to pull a stunt like that." It would mean losing any chance they had of constructing an alternative to the Agreement. Alderdice also contended that the British Government would have a strong interest in frustrating Unionist obstructionism and ensuring that they adhered to any agreement reached.

Political future of the Alliance party

He is optimistic about the party's chances at the next local elections which he felt will be something of a watershed for Alliance. They have 38 Local Government seats as against 43 for Sinn Fein and he is confident that they can overtake Sinn Fein in the 1993 local elections. He was bullish about his own prospects for a Westminster seat in East Belfast. Peter Robinson is vulnerable he feels having alienated his traditional hard right Unionist support by his post-Clontibret stance and his espousal of devolution. As against this no moderate is likely to vote for him if they have Alliance, OU and Tory candidates to choose from.

Yours sincerely,



Joe Hayes
Counsellor

Mr. Justice McMurtry
10.9.90 by *John H. Neeson*

Meeting between the Taoiseach and the Alliance Party,

Government Buildings, 5 September, 1990.

In McMurtry's copies of this note &

of the 1. The Alliance delegation was led by the party leader, Dr. John Alderdice, who was accompanied by his Deputy, Gordon Mawhinney, and by another senior party member, Sean Neeson.

The meeting lasted approximately one hour and was conducted in a very friendly and positive atmosphere.

Brooke Initiative

be put

on the 2. At the Taoiseach's invitation, Dr. Alderdice gave his assessment of the present status of the Brooke initiative. He said it appeared to the Alliance Party that the initiative had been developing very successfully for six to eight months and, through its own momentum, had carried along even those Northern Ireland politicians who were hesitant about the whole process. This progress seemed to continue into early July when, in the Alliance perception, it was halted by a number of requirements on the part of the Irish Government. If the party misunderstood the situation, it was important that this misunderstanding be cleared up quickly; if there was no misunderstanding, however, this created a fundamental problem for the Alliance Party - a problem which Alderdice would wish to explain.

3. The Taoiseach said that, in the light of the opening remarks by Dr. Alderdice, it was timely to have a meeting. During the period of the initiative, the Government had remained relatively silent in order to make it easier for all parties to reach agreement; the less positions were out in the public domain the better. (In this regard, he suggested that the Alliance Party should be as circumspect as possible in their briefing on today's talks).

4. The Taoiseach said he recognised that, if the process did not get underway, there was a possibility that the

10.10.90

Government might be blamed but we were prepared to take this risk. As indicated earlier, we had not rebutted charges made against us and had been very quiet in order to facilitate the process. Opposition spokesmen and the Dail generally were also very responsible in their approach to the talks.

- The Taoiseach also mentioned that at this time there should be
5. The Taoiseach went on to say that the talks were designed to secure a transcending Agreement. In this regard, we might have taken the attitude that the two Governments would control the initiative. However, again in order to help and facilitate the process, we had said to Peter Brooke that this was not necessary and that he could go ahead and present the initiative as his own.
 6. Brooke's initial approach had been that all talks should start simultaneously. The Unionists responded, however, that they wanted the Northern Ireland set of talks to begin before they would talk to Dublin. Although this presented us with something of a dilemma, we had accepted it; again, in order to be helpful, we said we would not ask to be party to these (internal) talks. It was also agreed with the British that there would be an overall liaison group to cover the three sets of talks; this would keep us informed of what was happening in the Northern talks.

Deadline of 5th July

7. The Taoiseach said that the deadline of 5th July for his statement, which had been set by Peter Brooke, was an artificially created one. Some twelve hours before the statement was due to be made, we received a long text from the British which contained much material which we had not seen before. In the intervening timeframe, we tried to absorb it but this in fact proved quite impossible. At no

stage, however, and the Taoiseach laid emphasis on this, did we say that the Secretary of State could not make the statement; all we said was that, if he did go ahead, we might have to give our side of the story in a public statement.

8. The Taoiseach also mentioned that at this time there seemed to be an unfortunate change of advisers to the Secretary of State, and this did not help matters. In the event, all sides had done their best to ensure damage limitation. The Taoiseach again emphasised that we did not veto the Secretary of State's proposed statement; it was dangerous to say we did and only served to make the Unionists more "hot and bothered".
9. With our encouragement, the Secretary of State had kept the process going. The question now was the timing of the talks between the parties in the North - in particular the Unionists - and ourselves. We had tried a considerable number of drafting options but the Unionists were proving very "stroppsy" and insisting that "substantial progress" be made in the internal talks before they would agree to the opening of North/South talks. In order to be as helpful as possible, we had departed from the original agreement with the British that all sets of talks would start simultaneously and were prepared to agree that the North/South talks would begin within weeks of the internal talks. We could not however accept a situation where we had no clear guarantee or understanding that we would be involved in the process at some stage.
10. The Taoiseach said he did not believe we were at an impasse. John Hume had drafted a possible compromise paper just before the holidays and had apparently a good meeting with the Unionists about it. The Taoiseach himself had seen Peter Brooke at the launch of the North/West Study in

Redcastle and had suggested that the process not be formalised too much; a private understanding about a timescale would be satisfactory from our point of view.

Article 4 of the Agreement.

11. The Taoiseach said he would like to clarify the position about Article 4 of the Agreement. The discussions underway at present did not derive from Article 4, as this clearly envisaged devolution being established in circumstances where the Agreement would stay in place. Such a scenario would clearly be anathema to Unionists. We were therefore talking about arrangements which would supercede and transcend the Agreement.

Response by Alderdice

12. Dr. Alderdice said that the Taoiseach's views were very helpful and they illustrated what he called the problem of misunderstanding. The Alliance had always felt that it would be unlikely that something could emerge which all parties could put their name to, unless this was in fact a new Agreement. In reality, it had to be a whole new document before the Unionists could agree to it. In the Alliance view, therefore, the talks could be much more important than those of 1985. He said it was interesting that the Taoiseach's presentation seemed to recognise this.
13. The Alliance view also was that, where internal structures were in question, this was a matter for the Northern Ireland parties; there should be as little input as possible from anyone else into these internal talks, except perhaps initially from the UK in a chairmanship role. But there could be no final agreement on internal Northern structures until all sides, including the two Governments, were in agreement; there could be no partial outcome until the

whole had been agreed. He had a sense that the Unionists accepted this, though they differed from Dublin as to timing.

14. Alderdice went on to say that the Taoiseach was in a different position from the Unionists in that, as Head of the Government, he could carry the country with him. The Unionists, on the other hand, believed they needed to be able to "look forward towards some arrangement", where they would be representative of the people of Northern Ireland, before they could speak to the Government here. They needed to have some "little piece of work done" internally in this direction before they would agree to coming to North/South talks. Alderdice added that he had the sense that we were afraid that if Unionists went into internal talks, without a date being set for the North/South talks, they would "destroy the process".

Further Discussion

15. The Taoiseach again emphasised in some detail the concessions that the Government had made, and this against the background where public opinion in the South was strongly supportive of the existing Agreement. From the point of view of Southern public opinion, the concessions we had made were major ones. If we were talking about new arrangements to transcend the Agreement, we must be involved. An essential element of the Nationalist position is that no new arrangements for Northern Ireland can be developed unless the arrangements with the South are also spelt out. Otherwise, it would be a recipe for the instability of the past. We see the involvement of the Irish Government as axiomatic and basic. Turning to Alderdice's point about the difficulties of Heads of political parties talking to the Government, the Taoiseach said he understood that it was to overcome this perceived

problem that the idea had been put forward that Peter Brooke would lead the Northern delegation at such talks.

16. The Taoiseach went on to emphasise that every effort would be made to get over the remaining difficulties. He regretted that some Unionists seemed to be living in "cloud cuckoo land" - the reality was that European union was around the corner. While Unionist politicians had a major inhibition in talking to him, he had been very warmly received by Unionist businessmen on his recent visit to Belfast.
17. Alderdice said that the Unionist difficulty arose out of a "sense of threat". In the South there was a feeling of confidence because the country was self-governing. In the North this was not the case and as a result people felt paranoid. An example of this was the fact that the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Reg Empey, had been thrown out of the Unionist group in City Hall because he had been in the same building in Belfast as the Taoiseach.
18. Alderdice accepted fully that, from all points of view (including the Unionists), there had to be a resolution of the three relationships. However, it would be difficult for him to accept that the Irish Government could be present at talks on internal structures for Northern Ireland. For him this would involve de facto acceptance of Articles 2 and 3. Dublin had, of course, to be involved in discussions about all relationships, including final agreement on internal Northern Ireland structures. But our actual involvement as of right in the Northern talks would "require one to say that the writ of the Irish Government ran throughout the island". If this were maintained, it would make the Alliance Party fundamentally reappraise their position on the Agreement. The Taoiseach, responding to references to Articles 2 and 3, said that we had not been saying anything

about Articles 2 and 3 for a long time. It was the McGimpsey brothers who had forced the Articles on to the agenda and had made the Supreme Court interpret them.

19. The discussion then turned back to the North/South talks; the Taoiseach mentioned that John Hume, arising out of a meeting before the holidays with the Unionists, had the clear impression that the Unionists had not asked Brooke to lead their delegation but that this suggestion had come from the British side. For us it was not a major issue whether Unionists came on their own or were led by Brooke.
- should say or do anything which would alienate the
20. Mawhinney said that there was no doubt that the Unionists were serious. If they were not prepared to make progress, the Agreement would be quickly "back in force" and it would be seen that there was no alternative to it; there was therefore very great pressure on the Unionists to make progress
- there could not have been a more
21. The Taoiseach said we were in the process as of right and this right was not conditional on anything else. At the outset in fact, as he had indicated earlier, it was clearly understood with the British that we would be involved from day one.
22. Alderdice said that what worried him now was that the whole process seemed to be beginning to dissipate. Westminster elections were coming close and once the electoral process was underway the various parties, who at the end of the day wanted to take votes off one another, would fragment. In addition, with the likely early appointment of a Commissioner to review local government boundaries, it was possible that the British might tinker with local government powers in the North. What Molyneaux wanted was an increase in local government powers and any move in this direction would play into his hands. If there was a revision of

local government boundaries and powers, the Councils in the border counties, which would be nationalist controlled, would gravitate towards the South; those in the rest of the North, given likely unionist paranoia, would go their own way and refuse to allocate places on committees or boards to nationalists or indeed to the Alliance Party. The end result would be a "de facto ^{repartition} partition", which could impede political progress for 40-50 years.

23. The Taoiseach said he thought this was an exaggeration. He emphasised again that neither the Alliance nor ourselves should say or do anything which would exacerbate the situation. In the period ahead, we would be doing everything possible, without sacrificing basic positions, to support Peter Brooke and get the talks underway. We were, however, talking about major fundamental issues on which civil wars had been fought in the past. It was encouraging that Alderdice and he could talk about these matters across a table even though their ancestors could not. Alderdice interjected that that was the type of constructive tone that both of them wanted to see followed.

Concluding Remarks

Extradition

24. Alderdice then said that extradition was one specific area about which they were particularly worried; the extradition issue is perceived in the North as a kind of "touchstone", even though it is publicly exaggerated beyond its practical significance. In reply, the Taoiseach said that practical cooperation between the police forces was far more important than extradition. Extradition was a matter about which public opinion in every country was very sensitive. The extradition issue had to be seen against a background of cases such as the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, the remarks of Lord Denning, etc. Even though we did not say this publicly, these factors did not encourage any Irish

Executive or Parliament to hand their citizens over to another jurisdiction.

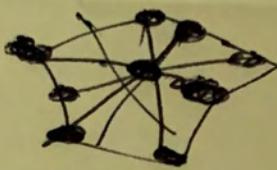
25. The Taoiseach then explained that a number of cases in the recent past had arisen under earlier legislation but that he expected future cases to come under the new 1987 legislation. This new legislation should be allowed to work; if flaws showed in it, it could be looked at again. The Taoiseach went on to say that, in our view, the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act (CLJA) offered a better vehicle in many instances. In cases arising out of a clear-cut outrage in British or Northern Ireland, there should be no problem with extradition; however, if a particular case looked difficult, there was every good reason to use the CLJA.
26. Alderdice said that he appreciated that any difficulties in this area could be teased out over a period and that no immediate issue arose now. The Taoiseach added that it was very helpful that the two Attorney Generals had a good working relationship.

Concluding Remarks

27. At the conclusion of the meeting, there was a brief discussion about the position of the second tier leadership in the Unionist parties. Alderdice paid particular tribute to Peter Robinson and mentioned that he had drafted the three Unionist pre-conditions to talks in such a way that they could be met by the two Governments. Mawhinney added that Unionists had to create obstacles in order to overcome them - i.e. to be able to say to public opinion that they had won concessions. Alderdice added that, in a private conversation recently, Robinson expressed the view that the envisaged political talks could constitute the "most important political development since partition if buckled down to now".

28. In reply to the Taoiseach's question about whether public opinion was ahead of politicians in the North, Alderdice said the stock of politicians in the North was very low at present. This allowed people who took an intransigent line to get away with extreme positions. However, the fact that he could have useful meetings with the Taoiseach put pressure on such people. Alderdice added that if Molyneaux was prepared to help move matters forward, and was sufficiently interested, he could be the next Prime Minister of Northern Ireland; however, the reality was that he did not seem to be interested in this possibility. Alderdice's hope was that, if Taylor and Smyth came to realise that this was a possible option for one or other of them, they might be moved to topple Molyneaux from the leadership of the Official Unionists.

DG
Dermot Gallagher,
5 September, 1990.



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Bogota.

H/M'Colly
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~~Dear Sir~~ 519.

The Incident was
yesterday about the Addisie
meeting - You may wish to
discuss the enclosed with him,
which has been copied to Denehy.

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P. H. Morris
New York
P. G.

M. H. Larkby
This is a good brief
present you is the best I
have seen yet. I
519.

Taoiseach's meeting with Dr. John Alderdice

5 September, 1990.

1. Dr. Alderdice will be accompanied by his Deputy, Gordon Mawhinney, and by another senior party member Seán Neeson. (Neeson is a former member of the Northern Ireland Assembly and currently Alliance Party spokesman on the Environment.) The meeting with the Taoiseach will be followed by meetings with Minister O' Malley and Mr. Dukes and a courtesy call on Ambassador Fenn. Dr. Alderdice has indicated that he would expect to brief the media "in broad outline terms" on his presentation to the Taoiseach.
2. The principal focus of the meeting will be on the current prospects for political progress; extradition (see below) is also likely to be touched on briefly. On the political front, Alderdice will be anxious to impress on the Taoiseach his concern that the momentum for progress is being dissipated and to argue that a more accommodating attitude on the part of the Government is required if talks are to get off the ground. He is likely to speak at some length about the political vacuum that exists in the absence of devolved structures and the consequences of this for daily life in Northern Ireland. (The Alliance Party has a commitment in principle to devolution; there is also, however, the political reality that - with only 10% of the popular vote and no seat in Westminster - the party is currently marginalised and might well improve its position if devolved structures were created.)

Alliance views on current state of play

3. At a dinner in Belfast in mid August (see Joint Secretary's report attached) Dr. Alderdice put his views on the current state of play. The key point in his presentation was as follows:

"The Agreement had achieved nothing. If now, five

years after the Agreement, the Irish Government was prepared to give no concessions of consequence and was determined to prevent political progress in Northern Ireland by its insistence on being in on talks from the start, this would be the last straw and the Alliance Party would have to publicly declare that it no longer supported the Agreement because of the role it gave the Irish Government and the use of that role to prevent political progress."

In his remarks, Alderdice was also particularly critical of what he saw as the Governments "veto" of Brooke's statement of 5 July. He professed himself unable to understand "what Dublin was afraid of" - as agreement would have to be reached in all three areas before the talks concluded, he believed that we already had the guarantees we needed?

Points which might be made by the Taoiseach

4. It will be important to impress on Alderdice that we have from the outset adopted a positive and flexible attitude in trying to move this process forward. The Taoiseach's statement at an early stage that we were prepared to consider new arrangements which might transcend the Agreement was a catalyst for much that followed. The fact that the three original Unionist pre-conditions are no longer deemed an issue in the negotiations speaks for itself. There are, however, a number of crucial considerations which have governed our approach:
 - This exercise is not about devolution under Article 4 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Article 4 clearly envisaged devolution taking place in the context of, and co-existing with, the Agreement. But anyone who takes the Unionists at their word - as we do - has to accept that any set of arrangements which might emerge

at the conclusion of the present negotiations could hardly co-exist with the Agreement. It is clear, therefore that we are not talking about a devolutionary adjunct to the Agreement but exploring whether it might be possible to design a new and better structure in its place.

- It is a matter of logic and common sense that, as co-signatories of the Agreement, both Governments must be fully engaged in any consideration of a possible new arrangement which might take its place. Our central role in the process therefore is not a matter of debate or negotiation but, quite simply, inherent in the nature of the exercise.
- We did not at any stage seek participation in the internal talks. It would obviously have been open to us to advance a series of arguments to justify fully our participation in this first strand of the discussions; however - and this was not an easy decision - we consciously desisted from so doing in order to enhance the prospects of getting the initiative off the ground. In taking this position, a major factor was our very clear understanding - on the basis of discussions and agreement between the two governments - that all three strands would get underway simultaneously.
- Both governments had counted on a general acceptance that the three sets of talks - which by common consent were interwoven - would begin simultaneously and continue in parallel. Instead, as Alliance is aware, an attempt was made to introduce a further precondition that "substantial progress" would have to be achieved in the internal talks before the North-South talks could begin. It must surely be obvious that for

a whole variety of reasons this pre-condition could not be acceptable to us.

- Firstly, and most fundamentally, to accept such a pre-condition would be inconsistent with the basic nationalist analysis of the nature of the problem we confront. As John Hume has consistently and cogently argued, it is essential to the achievement of progress that relationships between the two traditions on this island be addressed in an open, honest and generous way. North-South discussions are therefore a key ingredient in the achievement of progress; to require substantial progress in advance of the opening of these talks simply does not make sense from a nationalist perspective. It establishes an unrealisable objective for the internal talks, with all the potential for frustration and friction that this implies.
 - It is surely in everyone's interest to avoid a situation where talks begin on a basis that already contains the seeds of failure. If the talks get going, then there is a huge investment on all our parts in their successful outcome. The only beneficiaries of an early breakdown would be the men of violence. The issues are far too serious to permit us to go lightly into talks without having established a sound foundation on which a proper structure can be built.
5. In summing up, the Taoiseach might again emphasise the lengths to which we have already gone in seeking to achieve progress (our willingness to accept a sequential rather than a simultaneous opening of the three strands of talks, our efforts to find language on key points that would respond to Unionist needs). We fully share the concern to maintain momentum and will be resuming intensive discussions with Mr.

Brooke. We are still hopeful that ways will be found of bridging the remaining gaps; however, the concern to maintain momentum - legitimate and important as it is - cannot lead us to lose sight of basic realities and basic positions of principle.

Extradition

6. The Alliance Party has been sharply critical of what it perceives as shortcomings and defects in our extradition arrangements. If the issue is raised, the Taoiseach might respond that we have recently gone to considerable lengths to put new legislation on the statute books; there is no justification for introducing further changes until the existing laws have been tested in the courts.

Alliance Party. Mr Alderdice, would also be a guest. Mr. Alston wanted me to bear at first hand of a hostile view of the Agreement developing in the Alliance Party and likely to manifest itself in the near future. He has previously expressed concern about the implications of this development for the Agreement, especially in regard to the likely impact of Anglo-Irish Division on Agreement by the Alliance Party in 4 September, 1990

The dinner was hosted by Mr. Alston last evening. Mr. Alderdice did most of the talking, supported at times by Mr. McGeown of the SDLP who was also present. He spoke plainly and with feeling, stressing the gathering now towards opposition to the Agreement in his Party, the urgency of the position from his point of view and the importance of making progress (which which he said he was not optimistic) in September. The following will give you the gist of his conversation:

He was a constitutionalist in principle. He believed politics was about running things and that decisions should be devolved to the lowest constitutional level. This was not his view purely because of the context of Northern Ireland. He would take his own view in Belfast and not just narrow devolution for Scotland and Wales but also for the English regions.

Politics in Northern Ireland were governed to some time dictated by the British Army. They had too little power in comparison to the RUC and the IRA. It was necessary to have a political party with

CONFIDENTIAL*cc Mr Callaghan*

15th August, 1990.

Ms A Anderson (On Return),
Counsellor,
Anglo-Irish Division,
Department of Foreign Affairs.

Dear Anne,

Conversation with John Alderdice

We spoke last week about Mr. Alston's invitation to me to attend a private dinner at Stormont at which the leader of the Alliance Party, Dr Alderdice, would also be a guest. Mr. Alston wanted me to hear at first hand of a hostile view of the Agreement developing in the Alliance Party and likely to manifest itself in the near future. He has previously expressed concern about the implications of this development for the Agreement, especially in regard to the likely impact of any denunciation of the Agreement by the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland and at Westminster; and of course, he wanted me to hear views on the current situation which are very similar to those of the British side.

The dinner was hosted by Mr. Alston last evening. Dr Alderdice did most of the talking, supported at times by Mr. McConnell of the NIO who was also present. He spoke plainly and with feeling, stressing the gathering move towards opposition to the Agreement in his Party, the urgency of the position from his point of view and the importance of making progress (about which he said he was not optimistic) in September. The following will give you the gist of his conversation:

- He was a devolutionist on principle. He believed politics was about running things and that decisions should be devolved to the lowest practicable level. This was not his view simply because of the context of Northern Ireland. He would take the same view in Britain and would not only favour devolution for Scotland and Wales but also for the English regions.
- Politicians in Northern Ireland were restricted to small-time district council politics. Even there, they had very little power; he could scarcely get a street light fixed. It was extremely hard to keep a political party going, and to keep good people in political life, in such frustrating circumstances; and the difficulty was

compounded by the fact that although local politicians had no power in Northern Ireland, they knew the Irish Government could and did exercise it here. Unionists (and no doubt some members of his own Party) were bitterly resentful that the SDLP had two means of influencing the British Government, their own representations and the more influential representations they could make through the Irish Government.

- The Alliance Party had been formed to provide a moderate voice in Northern Ireland and had done valuable service in criticising and advising Government in the last 20 years. Indeed, the shape of the Brooke initiative involving internal talks, North/South talks and talks between the two Governments had been set out first by the Alliance Party in a policy document of 1972. Despite this responsible role, the Alliance Party had been left completely in the dark about the Agreement. The former leader of the Party had not even been able to lay hands on a copy on the day it was signed. The total ignoring of the Unionist Parties and of the Alliance Party had left members of the parties shocked and bewildered, shocked that they had been left out in the cold and bewildered that the two Governments could have come to such a basic misreading of the Unionist position.
- Many members of the Alliance Party, including many Catholic members, had been opposed to the role given to the Dublin Government; and he was sure that in the reverse circumstances we in the South would feel the same way.
- The Alliance Party support was at 10% (note: this is the level of support at the last General Election). It was significant; but the Party had lost Council seats since the Agreement.
- Yet, the Alliance Party had continued to give conditional support to the Agreement on the grounds that it should be given a chance, especially to show whether it could bring progress towards devolution which everyone had been told at the time was the objective of the exercise.
- His Party had been at the forefront of efforts to get Unionists to the table. After years of these efforts they were willing to come to the table, but now the problem was Dublin, just as after Duisberg and, before that, after the Unionist task force report, the problem had been the SDLP (Alderdice suggested that the SDLP had walked away from dialogue with Unionists after these events although they had been encouraging beforehand).

- The Agreement had achieved nothing. If now, five years after the Agreement, the Irish Government was prepared to give no concessions of consequence and was determined to prevent political progress in Northern Ireland by its insistence on being in on talks from the start, this would be the last straw and the Alliance Party would have to publicly declare that it no longer supported the Agreement because of the role it gave the Irish Government and the use of that role to prevent political progress.
- He was personally in a very difficult position in his Party because many members had been pressing for reconsideration of the Party's policy on the Agreement and he had so far prevented that reconsideration from taking place. He was already under very strong pressure to begin such a process now.
- The Agreement represented joint authority. It gave the Irish Government power and he could understand that the Irish Government and the SDLP would not want to relinquish that power. Following the decision of the Supreme Court in the McGimpsey case (which had confirmed what Unionists had always known) the Agreement represented a way in which the Irish Government was fulfilling a constitutional imperative in respect of Northern Ireland. However, the division of Ireland had occurred because a very substantial number of people wanted to remain in the United Kingdom. That was still the case. These people could not be ignored.
- If the Irish Government genuinely wanted a new arrangement acceptable to all, what was it afraid of? The Unionists were prepared to agree that there would have to be general agreement in the talks before there could be agreement on internal matters. Was that not guarantee enough? Dublin did not seem to understand the situation. He could not make any impression.
- He could not understand how the Irish Government could have prevented the Peter Brooke statement of 5 July. It was an occasion on which he and many others like him expected, indeed demanded, that the Secretary of State would give his views on the current situation and on the possibility of political progress. The Irish Government's veto of Mr. Brooke's statement had completely changed the position. The Unionists who had fought long and hard to bring their parties out of the trenches were under strong and increasing pressure, whereas Jim Molyneaux and his supporters were absolutely delighted and now believed that the talks towards devolution were at an end.

I made the following general points in discussion:

- There was a heavy emphasis by Dr Alderice on the estrangement of Unionists since 1985 and on the necessity to accommodate the Unionist parties (or what he saw as the

progressive forces in them). Would it not be reasonable also to consider the previous 65 years when Unionists were in a position of dominance, especially in the 50 years of Stormont rule? Even now, in District Councils in which they were a majority, particularly in Dr Alderdice's own Council of Belfast, the Unionist parties ran affairs to the total exclusion of Nationalists, whereas, in Derry, Nationalists had been willing to give Unionists a share.

- The Irish Government was not complacent, content to rest on the Agreement and oblivious to the possibility of political progress. That was a false picture. The Irish Government had complied publicly with the one crucial demand of the Unionist leaders which was that the two Governments would consider an alternative to the Agreement. The talks had also reached a compromise on the question of an interval between Conferences and on the question of the Secretariat which represented substantial movement by the Irish Government. These were not inconsequential concessions as Dr Alderdice seemed to think.
- We had made these concessions in order to give Mr Brooke every encouragement in his efforts to find a basis for talks. At the same time, we had always harboured doubt that Unionists might not be ready to engage in serious talks. The only thing we had been "afraid of" was the danger of raising expectations which, if not fulfilled, could create a more unstable political situation.
- We had not stood in the way of devolution under the Agreement. Nor had the SDLP. In the aftermath of the Agreement, there had been no question of Unionists talking about anything. They had been intent on bringing down the Agreement in the same way as they had brought down the Sunningdale Executive. Now there was movement in the Unionist parties. But there was a problem about the North/South talks which was the forum in which any discussion of the shape of a new agreement would have to take place and also the forum in which all-island issues would be discussed, including Articles 2 and 3 and any other matters the parties wanted to bring up. The crux of the present difficulty - without going into detail - was that the actual holding of these talks was uncertain.
- The Unionists were talking and would talk only outside the framework of the Agreement and on the basis that they were discussing an alternative. As co-signatory, it was obvious that the Irish Government had the right to be satisfied about the basis of talks that might lead to a replacement of the Agreement.
- I could not agree that the Agreement had achieved nothing. I doubted very much if the progress that had been made this year would have been made in the absence of the Agreement (Alderdice demurred but the NIO members present agreed).

I noted a number of other advances since the Agreement; improvement in relations between the community and the RUC principally because of better policing of parades, changes in the Courts, notably the end of the big Supergrass trials, better management of the prisons and new fair employment legislation. These were not inconsiderable. At the same time, the influence which the Irish Government had been able to exert under the Agreement should not be exaggerated. There were many British Government policies with which we continued to disagree, and disagree profoundly on some of them. We had an important consultative role and the two Governments was obliged to seek to resolve differences between them, but there was no derogation of sovereignty on either side and the Agreement was remote from the joint authority referred to by Dr Alderice.

While I felt there was truth in the view that the two Governments had misread the likely reaction of the mass of Unionists to the Agreement in 1985, the most important achievement of the Agreement had been to survive in the face of that reaction. The Agreement had levelled the political ground in Northern Ireland. It had shown Unionists that they could not block everything; and it had given Nationalists a boost. That result had helped to make political progress possible within Northern Ireland and in Ireland as a whole.

I remained hopeful that a basis for talks could be found which was fair to all parties. But even if that did not prove possible on this occasion, some progress had been made and the Agreement had helped to secure it. Granted the longstanding policy of the Alliance Party as Dr Alderdice had outlined it, it seemed to me that rejection of the Agreement now would simply encourage a relapse to less stable and less promising conditions.

Although we were in disagreement, the conversation was conducted in a friendly spirit. I mentioned as we were leaving that you expected to be in touch with Dr Alderice for a private conversation after your return from leave. Dr Alderdice looked forward to that. I sensed that while he is well briefed by the British side on their view of the talks, he is not well informed of our position. I got the impression that he was prepared to reflect on the very broad description I gave of the Government's views and you may wish to consider presenting them more fully when you meet him privately.

Yours sincerely,

Declan O'Donovan

Declan O'Donovan
Joint Secretary

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.

Sarah Ann Alderice
She will prepare
for meeting.

To: Mr. Nally
From: Patricia Walsh

In re: Dr. John Alderdice
30/8/90 D.Knows what you plan
brief. S.M.
30/8.

The Taoiseach has agreed to meet with Dr. John Alderdice, Leader of the Alliance Party on Wednesday, 5th September (time to be decided). — 11 Am

I would be grateful if you would arrange for the preparation of a brief for this occasion, please.

Patricia Walsh
29 August, 1990.

✓ — A.D.
— R.O.M.

*No longer.
Dunleer, Please
arrive
as soon as
possible*

15 June, 1990.

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

Alderman Sean Neeson,
The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

Dear Alderman Neeson,

The Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D., has asked me to refer to your letter about the condition of the Dublin to Belfast road.

The Community Support Framework (CSF) adopted for Ireland last year under the E.C. Structural Funds provides for a European Regional Development Fund grant of IR£358.3 million for improvements to the national primary routes N1 to N25 in the period 1990 to 1993. A major operational programme for Roads and Other Transport Infrastructure is being finalised, in accordance with the CSF. Under the roads element of this programme immediate priority will be given to the development of five strategic sections of national primary routes, including the N1 (Euroroute E01) between Dublin City and the Border, north of Dublin. It is proposed to improve the route to motorway standard. Three initial sections of this motorway are listed in the draft programme, for commencement of construction in the period to 1993. These sections will involve the construction of 32 kilometres of new road at Balbriggan Co. Dublin and Dunleer and Dundalk, Co. Louth, at a cost of £180 million. Details of the schemes, including the phasing of construction, will be set out in the programme, which will be published as soon as the EC Commission gives its decision on the programme. Another major development of relevance is the Dublin Ring Road, sections of which have already been opened to traffic. This new road will form part of Euroroute E01 and will provide a link between the seven national routes radiating from Dublin City, including the N1, and will enable through traffic to by-pass the city. The timing of the remaining sections of the ring road will be given in the operational programme.

The Taoiseach has arranged that a copy of the operational programme, when published, will be sent to you for your information. It is envisaged that publication will take place in July or August.

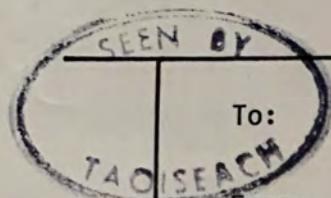
Yours sincerely,

Seán Ó Ceallaigh

*Private Secretary
to the Taoiseach.*

Oifig an Taoisigh, Tithe an Rialtais, Baile Átha Cliath 2.
Office of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings, Dublin 2.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH



Uimhir.....

To: Mr. McCarthy.
From: B. Collinge.

Mr. Shaw

Reply awaited

B.C. 28/5/90

Taoiseach,
For your
attention before
letter issued.

Re: Letter to the Taoiseach from Alderman Sean Neeson of
the Alliance Party about the condition of
the Dublin to Belfast road.

(Signature) Alderman Neeson has written to the Taoiseach, expressing his concern about the condition of the Dublin to Belfast road. He formally requests the Taoiseach, as President of the Council of Ministers, to consider a major upgrading programme especially because of the advent of the Single Market in 1992.

The draft reply across, based on information from Environment, is submitted for consideration, please.

B. Collinge

B. Collinge,
24 May, 1990.



THE ALLIANCE PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Headquarters:
88 UNIVERSITY STREET,
BELFAST BT7 1HE

Telephone:
Belfast 324274

14 March 1990

Mr Charles Haughey TD
Taoiseach
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Dear Mr Haughey

I am writing to express my deep concern about the state and standard of the main road between Belfast and Dublin. As someone who travels on this road on a regular basis I believe the standards fall far below that which one would expect between two major cities in other developed countries of Europe.

As the presiding President of the EEC I would formally request you to consider a major upgrading programme for the Belfast Dublin road. I am sure you would consider this issue as a matter of urgency because of the advent of the Single European Market in 1992. High standards of communications are vital if the Island of Ireland is to take full advantage of the opportunities created by 1992.

I look forward to hearing your response on this vital issue in the near future.

Yours sincerely

ALDERMAN SEAN NEESON
ALLIANCE PARTY ENVIRONMENT SPOKESMAN

27 March, 1990.

Alderman Sean Neeson,
The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

Dear Alderman Neeson,

Thank you for your letter of the 14th March, 1990 addressed to the Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D., regarding the condition of the main road between Belfast and Dublin.

I will bring your letter to the Taoiseach's attention as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE J. SHAW

Private Secretary
to the Taoiseach.

- ! BRIAN McCARTHY
- ! TRANSMITTED FOR YOUR ADVICE REGARDING
- ! AN APPROPRIATE REPLY PLEASE
- ! GS3186/WP3

W. L. Murray
Re: Govt. advice from
D/I Environment.
R. G. 27/3/90

Letter to the Taoiseach from the Northern Ireland Alliance Party,
about the condition of the Dublin Road to Belfast
(National Primary Route N1)

Suggested Material for inclusion in Reply

The Community Support Framework (CSF) adopted for Ireland provides for a European Regional Development Fund grant of IR£358.3 million for improvements to the national primary routes N1 to N25 in the period 1990 to 1993. An Operational Programme for Roads and Other Transport Infrastructure is being finalised, in accordance with the CSF. Under the roads element of this programme immediate priority will be given to the development of five strategic sections of national primary routes, including the N1 (Euroroute E01) between Dublin City and the Border, north of Dundalk. It is proposed to improve the route to motorway standard.

Three initial sections of this motorway are listed in the draft programme, for commencement of construction in the period to 1993. These sections will involve the construction of 32 kilometres of new road at a cost of EIR 80 million. Details of the schemes, including the phasing of construction, will be set out in the programme, which will be published as soon as the EC Commission gives its decision on the programme (decision expected shortly). Another major development of relevance is the Dublin Ring Road, sections of which have already been opened to traffic. This new road will form part of Euroroute E01, will provide a link between the seven national routes radiating from Dublin City, including the N1, and will enable through traffic to by-pass the city. The timing of the remaining sections of the ring road will be given in the operational programme.

~~Balbriggan to Dublin
Dun Laoghaire to Cork~~

~~Dublin Road~~

~~Loop~~

~~to South~~

at Balbriggan to Dublin,
Dun Laoghaire to Cork and
at Dundalk to Louth

~~Dundalk
to Louth~~

~~A copy of the future program
will be sent to you in July.~~

4/5/86

Hopkins

N.P. The Taoiseach has instructed that a copy of the operational programme when published should be sent to you for your information. It is envisaged that publication may be in late August.



FAX

Mícheál Ó Muirí

712378

OIFIG AN AIRE COMHSHAOIL
(Office of the Minister for the Environment)

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 1
(Dublin 1)

16 Beltaine, 1990.

B. Collinge,
Department of the Taoiseach,
Government Buildings,
Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2.

A Chara,

I refer to your letter of 28 March, 1990 about correspondence on the condition of the Dublin Road to Belfast, from Alderman Sean Neeson of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland. Suggested material for inclusion in reply is enclosed.

Mise, le meas,

To Lanyon
Gerry Rice,
Private Secretary.

B.R. 12/4/99

Dynamite,

Please BF
in 2 weeks time

BB $\frac{29}{3}$ $\frac{50}{50}$.

28 March, 1990.

Private Secretary,
Minister for the Environment.

Dear Private Secretary,

Please see the attached copy of a letter from the Northern Ireland Alliance Party about the condition of the Dublin Road to Belfast.

Perhaps you could let us have a suitable draft reply for the Taoiseach's consideration in this case, please.

Yours sincerely,

B. Collinge

B. Collinge.

Gerry Rice << 788867

→ FAX NO. 712378

Betty Moriarty
to arrange for
somebody to contact
me. $\frac{3}{10}$

Discussed with
Betty Moriarty
t-day. She was
unable to locate our
original letter. I
undertook to fsc her a
copy

BB $\frac{10}{5}$ $\frac{50}{50}$



Róinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 11 May, 1990 Time: _____

To: _____

For: BETTY MCGARRY

From: BRIAN COLLINGE

Total number of pages, including this cover sheet: 4

Brief description of material: _____

Any special instructions: Arrange for somebody to contact
BRIAN.

Transmitting operator: Dymphna Tuile

This material is being sent from fax telephone number 603281.

This number should be used for return faxing.

If there are any problems on receipt of fax please phone
transmitting operator at 689333 ext.



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 21 May, 1990 Time: 11:50

To: Michael Murphy

For: _____

From: Brian Collinge

Total number of pages, including this cover sheet: 3

Brief description of material: _____

Any special instructions: _____

Transmitting operator: Collette McDermott

This material is being sent from fax telephone number 603281.

This number should be used for return faxing.

If there are any problems on receipt of fax please phone
transmitting operator at 689333 ext.



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

May, 1990.

Alderman Sean Neeson,
The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

Dear Alderman Neeson,

The Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D., has asked me to refer to your letter about the ~~state~~ of the Dublin to Belfast road.
condition

The Community Support Framework (CSF) adopted for Ireland last year under the E.C. Structural Funds provides for a European Regional Development Fund grant of IR£358.3 million for improvements to the national primary routes N1 to N25 in the period 1990 to 1993. A major operational programme for Roads and Other Transport Infrastructure is being finalised, in accordance with the CSF. Under the roads element of this programme immediate priority will be given to the development of five strategic sections of national primary routes, including the N1 (Euroroute E01) between Dublin City and the Border, north of Dundalk. It is proposed to improve the route to motorway standard. Three initial sections of this motorway are listed in the draft programme, for commencement of construction in the period to 1993. These sections will involve the construction of 32 kilometres of new road at Balbriggan Co. Dublin and Dunleer and Dundalk, Co. Louth, at a cost of £IR80 million. Details of the schemes, including the phasing of construction, will be set out in the programme, which will be published as soon as the EC Commission gives its decision on the programme. Another major development of relevance is the Dublin Ring Road, sections of which have already been opened to traffic. This new road will form part of Euroroute E01 and will provide a link between the seven national routes radiating from Dublin City, including



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

- 2 -

the N1, and will enable through traffic to by-pass the city. The timing of the remaining sections of the ring road will be given in the operational programme.

The Taoiseach has arranged that a copy of the operational programme, when published, will be sent to you for your information. It is envisaged that publication will take place in July or August.

Yours sincerely,

Private Secretary
to the Taoiseach.



June
May, 1990.

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

Alderman Sean Neeson,
The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

Dear Alderman Neeson,

The Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D., has asked me to refer to your letter about the condition of the Dublin to Belfast road.

The Community Support Framework (CSF) adopted for Ireland last year under the E.C. Structural Funds provides for a European Regional Development Fund grant of IRf358.3 million for improvements to the national primary routes N1 to N25 in the period 1990 to 1993. A major operational programme for Roads and Other Transport Infrastructure is being finalised, in accordance with the CSF. Under the roads element of this programme immediate priority will be given to the development of five strategic sections of national primary routes, including the N1 (Euroroute E01) between Dublin City and the Border, north of Dublin. It is proposed to improve the route to motorway standard. Three initial sections of this motorway are listed in the draft programme, for commencement of construction in the period to 1993. These sections will involve the construction of 32 kilometres of new road at Balbriggan Co. Dublin and Dunleer and Dundalk, Co. Louth, at a cost of fIR80 million. Details of the schemes, including the phasing of construction, will be set out in the programme, which will be published as soon as the EC Commission gives its decision on the programme. Another major development of relevance is the Dublin Ring Road, sections of which have already been opened to traffic. This new road will form part of Euroroute E01 and will provide a link between the seven national routes radiating from Dublin City, including the N1, and will enable through traffic to by-pass the city. The timing of the remaining sections of the ring road will be given in the operational programme.

The Taoiseach has arranged that a copy of the operational programme, when published, will be sent to you for your information. It is envisaged that publication will take place in July or August.

Yours sincerely,

Private Secretary
to the Taoiseach.

Oifig an Taoisigh, Tithe an Rialtais, Baile Átha Cliath 2.
Office of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings, Dublin 2.

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BKF in
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~~571188~~

~~571189 (noted)~~

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~~MKF~~

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END of file