

START of file

Mr. D. Gallagher

Mr. Nason

SECRET

ANGLO-IRISH SECTION

WEEKLY BRIEF

WEEK ENDING 18th MAY 1990

AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs



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Confidential

16 May 1990

Mr. Dermot Gallagher
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs

Dear Assistant Secretary

Political Talks

Government/SDLP meeting

I have briefed the British side on the Government/SDLP talks of 11 May on the basis of the briefing given to you by the Minister. I told Mr. Alston that:

- the document agreed at the Conference of 19 April was not shown to the SDLP;
- the Government told the SDLP they were not optimistic about the possibility of arranging talks (which reflected the longstanding view on our side);
- nonetheless the Government were trying to be as helpful as possible as the Taoiseach had publicly indicated in the Dail;
- the Government had assured the SDLP that nothing would be allowed to damage or interfere with the Agreement;
- if the Agreement were to be replaced, this would have to be by a better arrangement and, of course, Dublin and the SDLP would have a decisive voice on this;
- there was no question of suspending the Conference or the Secretariat; but the Government had no objection to a natural gap between Conferences, the idea of which had been around for quite some time;
- the Joint Heads of the Secretariat would become involved in servicing talks, as part of a liaison group;
- the three sets of talks, Internal, North/South and East/West would be in unison.

I drew Mr. Alston's attention to the fact that no prepared statement had been issued on our side and that comments had been restricted to Minister Collins' remarks to the press outside Government Buildings. I drew his attention especially to the fact that the SDLP had made no statement either and had been exceedingly careful and restrained in contacts with the press. Mr. Alston said that this was recognised on the British side.

British/Unionist meeting

I said it had been very useful to have a briefing immediately after the British/Unionist meeting on 11 May and I requested that the same arrangement be made for the resumed talks next Tuesday (22 May).

Mr. Alston had nothing to add to Mr. Burns' briefing of last Friday. I did ask him however about Frank Millar's two articles in the Irish Times of 15 May. I said that Millar seemed remarkably well informed, so much so that I was concerned about his suggestion, repeated in today's Newsletter, that Mr. Brooke had proposed a British/Irish Conference which would work alongside the inter-party talks until the two Conferences, or sets of talks, could be merged. I said it seemed strange, that Millar had written only of two sets of talks. In reply, Mr. Alston said he could only say that the ground had been gone over very carefully in the manner agreed and that, specifically, it had been made clear that three sets of talks were involved.

Incidentally, as has been the practice for the last three years, Paisley and Molyneaux met the British side without a notetaker or anyone else present on their side.

Problem Points

In regard to Mr. Burns' report to us that the Unionist leaders had "taken very strongly against" the idea that the North/South talks would be in unison with the internal talks, Mr. Alston said that Mr. Brooke was tentatively thinking of a two-way process to deal with this point; first, there could be an immediate formal meeting on North/South talks but, second, since much of the business of these talks could only be addressed after elements of agreement had emerged in the internal talks, substantive meetings would take place at a later time.

Speaking personally, I said that the whole question of timing was vital to our side and of course was a major element of the agreed document; I thought it important, therefore, to caution against any suggestion which would depart in form or in practice from the understanding reached between Ministers.

In regard to the Secretariat, I drew Mr. Alston's attention, to our understanding - which Millar had got right in the Irish Times story - that the Secretariat officials servicing any new

talks would not cease their normal duties as members of the Secretariat.

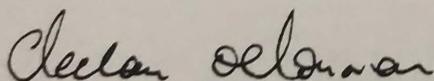
Timing of the Gap

Although the British side are not forthcoming in discussion on this point, it does appear, as I reported last week, that the timing of the gap is being pushed back, perhaps considerably so, by the lack of preparedness on the Unionist side, by the need for Mr. Brooke to tease out issues with the two Unionist leaders and by Molyneaux's apparent determination to avoid talks during the Summer period when, as he has put it in a public statement, "the gaolers will be on holidays". As I have mentioned to you, Molyneaux has plans to make an extended trip to New Zealand this Summer. While Mr. Alston could not give me the dates, he thought that this trip was likely to begin in June.

Contact between the Secretary of State and the Minister?

Mr. Burns told me last week that Mr. Brooke did not think he needed to speak to the Minister at this point. Mr. Alston said he thought it possible, but not likely, that Mr. Brooke might wish to make private contact by telephone. (It has seemed to us here that any public contact between the Secretary of State and the Minister in the period before Mr. Brooke's resumed talks with the Unionists would carry the danger of appearing to consider further concessions, notably on the Secretariat.)

Yours sincerely



Declan O' Donovan
Joint Secretary

16th May, 1990.

Confidential

Mr Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreigns.

Dear Assistant Secretary,

Upper Bann By-Election

I had some discussion with Mr Alston today about the Upper Bann by-election which takes place tomorrow. While Ministers and Officials think that the Conservative candidate, Ms Jones, will do well, they have no clear idea of what inroads she will make in the Unionist vote; it is, of course, taken for granted that the UUP candidate, Mr Trimble, will win comfortably.

I noted to Mr Alston that the Conservative Government had come a remarkably long way since the endorsement of the affiliation of the North Down Conservatives at last year's Conservative Party Conference when we understood the gravest doubts were expressed by senior figures in the Party including Lord Whitelaw, Mr. King and Mr Brooke about the Party decision. I also recalled that Mr Miles had told me some months ago that Ministers' in-trays were overflowing with papers advising against Ministers' involvement in the formation of and business of Conservative associations here. In this by-election, however, Ms Jones has not only received public messages of support from the Prime Minister and Secretary of State but has also had the personal assistance in her campaign of Minister Cope, Minister Needham and Minister Bottomley as well as the personal intervention of the Conservative Party Chairman, Mr Baker, and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Chris Patten. I suggested that the decision to permit affiliation had now developed a momentum of its own with consequences which are not fully foreseeable.

Mr Alston said that officials in the NIO had been unhappy about the whole business. He said that Mr Brooke himself had decided not to intervene personally in the campaign; and Minister Mawhinney had not intervened either because of his involvement in political talks. Interestingly, Mr Alston said that the matter had not been raised in discussion between Mr Brooke and Messrs Paisley and Molyneaux.

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Comment

NIO Ministers, except perhaps Mr Brooke who maintains reservations on the matter, see the intervention of the Conservatives in Northern Ireland politics as a means of applying pressure on the two main Unionist parties; and they will hope for respectable inroads into the 17,000 UUP majority in tomorrow's by-election. It remains to be seen whether, as many suppose, the Conservatives will simply eat into the Alliance Party; but as I have previously drawn to attention, the Conservative campaign seems to have had the effect of moderating the UUP candidate's position. Mr Trimble has been making reassuring noises about the prospects for political talks which are interesting given his record of intemperate remarks against the Agreement and the British and Irish Governments. The Conservative result will also be of interest to the British Labour Party especially if, as Mary Holland reports in today's Irish Times, some powerful unions are reconsidering their position on Labour Party organisation in Northern Ireland which has been seen as intergrationalist and therefore contrary to official Labour policy of unity by consent.

Yours sincerely,

Declan O'Rourke

Joint Secretary.

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SECURE FAX

IMMEDIATE

16 May 1990

For: HQ	From: Belfast
For: Secretary	From: Joint Secretary

Stevens Report

1. The Department learned in mid-afternoon today that the Secretary of State intended to make a statement to the House of Commons tomorrow afternoon on the Stevens Report. We made immediate enquiries with our opposite numbers here. It was apparent that the Department's information was well-founded but the British side were not at liberty to provide information until shortly before 6 p.m.

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2. They confirmed that the Secretary of State would make a statement to the House of Commons at 4 p.m. tomorrow afternoon and would lay a summary report of some 30 pages before the House. The British side also informed us that the Chief Constable would give a press conference in late morning (about 11.30 a.m.) at which they assumed he would be joined by Mr. Stevens. The British side could provide no information on what the Chief Constable and Mr. Stevens were likely to say.

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3. We were told that the summary of the Report to be laid before Parliament would be provided to us here tomorrow morning about 10.30 a.m. and that the British Embassy in Dublin would hand over the documents to the Department at the same time. In providing this information, the British side emphasised that they were very disturbed that we had learned of their intentions through a leak rather than through themselves and repeated that they had not been at liberty to give us any information until now.

4. In reply I recalled the events of last Autumn which had led to a period of high tension in our relations and three meetings of the Conference on the issue of collusion by the Northern Ireland security forces with paramilitaries, with particular reference to the role of the UDR. I also referred to the importance which our Ministers had attached at the Conference and particularly at the last Conference on 19 April to being told as much as possible in advance so that they could properly consider their response. The fact that we had been left to learn of the British side's intentions from outside sources and the extremely short period of time which would be available for consideration of the documents to be published tomorrow, would undoubtedly leave our Ministers with a feeling of being badly let down.

5. I added that the Secretariat was the appropriate channel for the transmission of whatever information was to be given on this matter and that it was not acceptable that the British Embassy should present documents in Dublin at the same time that they were presented here.

6. I asked the British side to reflect very carefully on whether they could not provide the summary to us this evening, pointing out that we could transmit it to Dublin by secure fax. I said that receipt of the document tomorrow mid-morning would give totally inadequate time for a proper consideration of our response and of any public statement.

7. I also asked for an advance indication of what the Chief Constable and Mr. Stevens would say at their morning press conference and of what Mr. Brooke would say to the Commons.

Post Script

8. Mr. John Ledlie (Deputy Secretary in charge of Security) phoned me at 7.30 p.m. He said that Mr. Brooke had agreed that we should have the summary report this evening (it has now been faxed to the Department). Mr. Brooke had, however, asked Mr.

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Ledlie to speak to me personally about the extreme political importance to him that we should not reveal anything of the contents before his statement to Parliament at 4 p.m. tomorrow, or indicate explicitly that we had received it before it was laid before Parliament (if we are pressed on this point, perhaps we could say simply that there have been contacts in the Secretariat).

9. Mr. Ledlie also spent some considerable time stressing the importance which Mr. Brooke attached to a measured response on our side. I said I was sure that our response would be considered but that it would of course depend on the content of the Report, the nature of the police press conference tomorrow and the nature of the statement to Parliament. (Comment: At first glance, and bearing in mind the limited terms of reference of the Stevens Enquiry, the summary seems to me to contain material which provides a fairly positive response to the concerns strongly expressed by our side last Autumn. We will let you have further views.)

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10. I am told the summary we have been given is one of a very long report containing highly classified security assessments. We had understood that the summary report to be laid before Parliament would be the Secretary of State's own summary of a submission on Stevens by the RUC Chief Constable. It appears, however, that following discussion between the NIO and the police the summary has been prepared by Mr. Stevens himself with the views of the Chief Constable and the NIO in mind.

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11. Mr. Ledlie will ask Mr. Brooke's agreement to provide advance information tomorrow morning on his statement (the text of which is unlikely to be ready much before 4 p.m.) and to provide whatever further briefing that can be given. Mr. Ledlie will also seek to brief us on what is likely to be said at the police press conference.

12. Lastly, I understand from the other side of the Secretariat that the British Embassy in Dublin was consulted this afternoon and was helpful in securing a favourable response to our representations here.

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Mr Gerald Collins TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House
DUBLIN 1

May 1990

The Chief Constable and I mentioned at the last meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference that the Stevens' Report had now been submitted to him. The Report, together with a summary which the Chief Constable will be making public later today, was passed to me earlier this week. I asked the British side of the Secretariat to provide you with an advance copy of the summary last night. The Report itself is, of course, not being made public. I shall be making a statement to the House of Commons this afternoon.

I regard Mr Stevens' report as a very professional piece of work. He has highlighted shortcomings and deficiencies in several important areas; action has already been taken or is in hand to remedy many of these and we shall be addressing the others immediately to decide how best to take them forward.

I know you will want to consider the summary yourself and I look forward to discussing it with you in due course. In the meantime I hope you will agree that it is important that public debate on these matters should be constructive and forward looking. It would be a tragedy if a consequence of the summary's publication was to give encouragement to those who seek to drive further wedges between the two sides of the community in Northern Ireland.

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Summary of Stevens Report - Essential Points

Terms of Reference:

Investigation of disappearance of material from Dunmurray Police Station, and subsequently from Ballykinlar Army Camp;

Alleged leak of information associated with the murder of Loughlin Maginn;

Following consultation with the Chief Constable - any matters which came to light during the course of the Enquiry; I was also asked to make relevant recommendations regarding these matters".

Conduct of the Enquiry:

Described by Stevens as "the largest external investigation in Northern Ireland and the most extensive of its type ever undertaken in the United Kingdom".

Enquiry computerised with a linkage between a Major Incident Room in Britain and a similar room in Northern Ireland - advantages of this were clear "following the severe accidental fire at the Enquiry's original offices in January".

Written statements taken from over 1,900 witnesses and suspects; 2,000 investigative enquiries undertaken; 2,000 man-hours of interviews with detained persons;

Over 2,600 documents of all types recovered from loyalist paramilitaries, though only 100 actual security force documents were recovered dating from the mid 1970's up to 1988.

94 people arrested and a total of 59 of these charged or reported for offences;

213 members of the RUC were interviewed;

Findings/Conclusions:

Because of reasons of State Security and Sub-Judice rules, "some aspects of the report, which is a substantial document, must remain confidential. However, I believe that the public interest demands that as much as is possible of the substance of my report is disclosed".

"It is clear that official information, originally produced by the RUC, the Army and the Prison Service, has passed illicitly into the hands of loyalist paramilitary groups. Documents and information from documents, have been traced to the possession of these paramilitaries. They have been used by them to enhance their own intelligence systems and

as an aid to the targeting of persons suspected of being republican terrorists".

The passing of information is restricted to a small number of individuals within the Security Forces "and is neither widespread nor institutionalised". The number of documents which have been obtained by the paramilitaries is small compared with the total number of such documents produced.

"In the difficult situation that exists within Northern Ireland, it must be accepted that any system will be vulnerable to some extent either to terrorist infiltration or to pressures that may be applied to individuals. However, at the time of the report no evidence of any recent leak of contemporary information has come to light. The latest date of any document traced to the possession of loyalist paramilitaries by the Enquiry is June 1988".

"Photo-montages are classified under the lowest security rating. During the Enquiry, no documents of any higher security classification have been recovered, or indeed come to notice as having been in the hands of any terrorist organisation".

Until 1988, it was not the practice of the Army (who produce photo-montages in co-operation with the RUC) to keep any records of their production or distribution.

Certain members of the UDR have been involved in collusion with loyalist paramilitaries. It would be wrong to conclude that there is a significant number of UDR soldiers who are involved with paramilitaries. This is not the case.

Improvements can be made in procedures for reporting and recording of allegations of crime against army personnel. "The vetting/screening system in relation to recruitment to the UDR was deficient in a number of areas. Individuals who had been adversely vetted by the RUC Vetting Section had nevertheless been recruited. A small number of these went on to commit terrorist related and criminal offences whilst serving with the regiment."

Need for improvements in the RUC Fingerprint Bureau and the Forensic Science Laboratory - Introduce a serious Crime Unit to give an effective co-ordinated approach.

Allegations in the Irish News of an Inner Circle in the RUC investigated but in the absence of any corroborative evidence, allegations could not be substantiated.

"A large number of montages and similar documents have been produced over the years without there being full recognition of their value to terrorist groups and there were inadequate security procedures. Thus the ingredients were present to allow a small number of persons to abuse positions of trust with little possibility of discovery.... The ease with which these small number of individuals have been able to avoid discovery is perhaps the most significant factor in the

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illegal trafficking of security force documents. It is important that a firm and unequivocal stance, such as that made by the chief Constable in his public statement of the 21st September 1989, be taken, demonstrating the true security significance of such information".

"A complex network of intelligence of all types was uncovered, involving the supply and exchange of information between loyalist paramilitary groups, with the Ulster Defence Association at the centre."

Clear need for accounting systems providing comprehensive records of the production and distribution of every document in the terrorist information system. Such a system must ensure that those responsible for passing restricted information can be traced and held criminally responsible.

A reassessment of security classification of intelligence material is required, as is a common approach to the subject by all sections of the security forces"

"Formation of a specialist Police Unit to concentrate upon terrorist investigation".

"It must be acknowledged, that in the present climate, leakages of information from the security forces may never be completely eliminated. However, if the measures recommended are introduced, there is every hope that any future collusion between the security forces and paramilitary terrorist groups will be eradicated.

The Report then gives a summary of its recommendations - totalling 83 in all:

Information and Intelligence Systems:

- (a) Review criteria guidelines for issue of recognition information; suspects inclusion in such material; the security classification of such material.
- (b) Research methods to uniquely identify documents; make them traceable; restrict circulation to operational needs; ensure accountability - a nominated person to be responsible; prevent unauthorised photocopying.
- (c) Similar criteria to apply to computer systems.
- (d) Ensure information is weeded regularly.

RUC:

- (a) Form an Anti-Terrorist Branch; Central reporting of documents finds - a senior officer to have an overview of finds; identify user access to computer records; identification features for

photocopied material; improved physical security for documents.

(b) Notify Army of all incidents involving Army personnel; Involve RUC in UDR vetting procedures.

(c) Various technical improvements in finger-printing and forensics.

Army:

(a) Much tighter vetting of applicants and existing members of the UDR -viz- RUC to be closely involved in vetting; an inter-organisation appeal process on disagreements between the Army and RUC; agree on definition of paramilitary organisations; interview UDR applicant's referees;

(b) A series of measures to ensure tighter control of security material, including soldier's notebooks etc.

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B. McMahon
Anglo/Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
17 May 1990

cc PST
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PSS
Mr Nally
Mr Matthews
Mr Brosnan
Embassy London
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B 7-75

B. McMahon
Anglo/Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
17 May 1990

cc PST
PSM
PSS
Mr Nally
Mr Matthews
Mr Brosnan
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Embassy Washington
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Conversation with Paddy O' Hanlon, Newry, 9 May 1990

Formerly a senior figure in the SDLP, Paddy O' Hanlon has now effectively dropped out of politics and devotes himself full-time to his new career as a barrister. While no longer active in politics, he continues to take a keen interest in the subject and remains a committed supporter of the SDLP. While he bemoaned the fact that with the departure of many of the leading lights from the Civil Rights days, the Party had lost "some of its old sparkle", he saw this as forming part of an inevitable process and felt that the Party was probably a more balanced and disciplined institution as a result.

Brooke initiative:

He sees little point in Brooke pursuing his initiative for devolution in Northern Ireland. In his view the basic ingredients for a democratic society (tolerance, ability to compromise etc) still do not exist, with the result that any devolutionary formula at the moment is doomed to failure. Devolution will only be possible when the basic ingredients of a democratic society are present - something which he believes will require a sea-change in unionist psychology, a process which he believes will take at least another decade.

In the meantime, he sees a continuation of direct rule, coupled with the Agreement, as the only option and he was pleased that the Taoiseach had definitively "knocked on the head" any notion of a suspension of the Agreement. In any event, he sees no great imperative or groundswell for a devolutionary settlement at this time. Both communities are reasonably happy with current arrangements and the generality of people are no longer all that interested in politics - something which was dramatically evidenced by the failure of Paisley's protest during the Taoiseach's visit to Belfast.

Overall, he perceives a gradual improvement in the situation in Northern Ireland. Belfast, while still containing its ghettos, is in an overall sense a much improved and less divided city compared with the Belfast of 20 years ago. In South Armagh,

possibly because of the chain of look-out posts along the border, there is a less intrusive army presence on the ground. As a consequence, there is less need for "reaction" from the locals. As a result, the "hard men" of the area, who traditionally provided the backbone of the IRA, are less active and many have returned to more traditional occupations - primarily smuggling.

Courts:

He expressed concern at what he perceives as a greater conservatism on the Bench - something which he attributes to the new Lord Chief Justice Hutton (who he continually referred to as "Orange Hutton"). Hutton has imposed a type of "team discipline" on the other members of the Bench, which is largely composed of Unionists and deeply conservative Catholics. There has been increased co-ordination on the pattern of sentences for both paramilitary and non-paramilitary crimes with a noticeable increase in their severity. O' Hanlon estimated that sentences had increased by about a third in recent times. There is also a pattern emerging of sentences being increased on appeal and he instanced two cases in which he had been involved the previous week where the Appeal Judge had asked why he should not increase the sentence imposed in the Trial Court.

In this context he felt that Justice Shiel was beginning to stand out as an exception and pointed to the case the previous week where Justice Shiel had thrown out the evidence of alleged police confessions in a murder case. [Note: Justice Shiel is commonly referred to as "the Agreement Judge" and is seen as having been appointed to the Bench last year as a result of pressure from the Irish Government which effectively prevented the appointment of the then Unionist front-runner, Ronnie Appleton. O' Hanlon had been particularly active at the time in lobbying against Appleton.]

B y - 7 5

Brendan McMahon
Anglo/Irish Division
15 May 1990

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

Economic Regeneration of West Belfast

1. On 15 May I had a series of meetings with a variety of people who are involved in the broad question of the economic regeneration of West Belfast. The following is a summary of the main points arising from these contacts.

(i) Meeting with Fr. Matt Wallace

2. Fr. Wallace is based in St. Peters Cathedral in Divis, has been the moving force behind the establishment of a number of Local Enterprise Projects (LEPs) in West Belfast and is a Director on the West Belfast Enterprise Board (WBEB) which is a loosely structured umbrella body comprising representatives of a number of LEP schemes and community-based training workshops. He enjoys the confidence and support of Bishop Cahal Daly and has had a good working relationship with the NIO and the official agencies involved in the Making Belfast Work (MBW) initiative.

Making Belfast Work

3. As when I met him six months ago, Fr. Wallace remains very sceptical about the real commitment of the main development agencies - especially the Industrial Development Board - to the economic regeneration of West Belfast. He did not seem to be enthused about the recent Government announcements on the Springvale Project and on the establishment of two advance factories in West Belfast (one on the Glen Road and the other in the Shankill). The latter would be of little use if they remained "locked up" i.e. if the IDB did not attract investors to locate there. On Springvale, he said that the development was a long-term proposition (perhaps up to 10 years). He felt that there should not be an overemphasis in the initiative on leisure/recreation as there were already quite a few "half-redundant" leisure centres in inner West Belfast which people cannot afford to use. The emphasis should be firmly on jobs and the WBEB had plans to express their interest in developing 8/10 acres of the site.

4. He contrasted the failure of the IDB to deliver any project in the Kennedy Enterprise Centre on Kennedy Way with the WBEB's success, through their own contacts and efforts, in recently attracting two medium-sized companies into the Centre - a textiles Company (Platform) who plan to employ about 80 people and a bath manufacturer (Camelot) who have a target of 50 jobs.
5. Fr. Wallace said that the WBEB had considered a number of ways in which the IDB might be encouraged to make more of a commitment to West Belfast. They had decided to write to the Chief Executive (Hopkins) requesting him to organise a meeting of the IDB Board in the Kennedy Enterprise Centre. They were also going to write to David Fell, the Permanent Secretary of DED, asking that some suitably qualified person from West Belfast be appointed to the Board of the IDB. The Bishop Daly would support this proposal by writing in similar terms to the Secretary of State or to Minister Needham.
6. Fr. Wallace acknowledged that the official Local Enterprise Development Unit (LEDU) was funding a significant part of the capital costs of the various LEP schemes. However, he maintained that this was still a comparatively cheap and easy way of the Government tackling the problems of West Belfast since the manpower component came from the voluntary efforts of the community itself without the official agencies having to engage the problem directly.
7. Fr. Wallace questioned why West Belfast should require some kind of special (i.e. implicitly finite) Government initiative. The problems of the area would, he felt, be more effectively tackled if West Belfast was to receive its equitable share of the mainstream Government spending programmes. If the MBW initiative expired without this being achieved, he feared that "a monster will have been

created" which will seriously damage all of those community groups who contributed to and were involved in Making Belfast Work.

WBEB and the Phoenix Trust

8. Fr. Wallace mentioned that the Directors of the WBEB had recently held a weekend seminar run by a professional management consultant (Colin Stott) where they reviewed their activities and discussed future strategies and objectives. One of the issues to emerge was the question of coordinating links with other LEP schemes (who are not connected to the Board) and with community groups. In this context I raised the question of the development of some form of relationship between the WBEB and the Phoenix Trust (whose Chairman is the SDLP Councillor Alasdair McDonnell). Despite the fact that he and McDonnell have differed in the past, Fr. Wallace seemed open to the idea of exploring some form of complementary relationship between the two bodies. He mentioned, however, that Bishop Daly had reservations about politicians being involved in the WBEB. Notwithstanding this reservation the Bishop had recently met two members of Phoenix (Marnie O'Neill and Eamonn McCartan) who outlined to him their analysis of the economic problems of West Belfast.

(ii) Meeting with Jackie Redpath

9. Jackie Redpath is the Director of the Shankill Development Agency and is also involved in the Phoenix Trust. The Agency was originally formed to run a Jobclub in the Shankill funded by MBW. It has since expanded its horizon and is now developing its own LEP scheme.

Making Belfast Work

10. Redpath believed that MBW was a serious and committed effort by Government to deal with the complex of socio-economic

problems in West Belfast. Contrary to my expectations Redpath did not seem to be particularly interested in the Springvale Project. He said that the Springfield Road has in recent years become a predominantly Catholic area and consequently the initiative would probably be of little benefit to the people of the Shankill. He was more positive about the recently announced IDB advance factory for the Shankill. His understanding was that the IDB were considering a greenfield site in Ballygomartin but he had no idea if the Board had any particular investor in mind.

Problems of the Shankill

11. Redpath went to some lengths to impress upon me the particular nature of the socio-economic problem in the Shankill, to illustrate how it differed from the situation in Catholic West Belfast and to argue that its discrete problems therefore required a differentiated policy response. He said that the house-clearing and relocation policies of the 1970s had reduced the population in the Greater Shankill from 70,000 to 27,000 over a fifteen year period. The residual population was characterised by a high proportion of elderly people - in marked contrast to the young age profile of Catholic West Belfast. The public house-building programme promised by the Housing Executive had been cut back with the result that the existing housing stock is in poor condition. Most of the talented young people in the area move from the Shankill at the first opportunity leaving the less-able, the unskilled and the unemployable. Redpath argued that the MBW programme must tailor its activities in the Shankill to respond to these particular problems and not simply apply the same kind of measures which are seen as the prescription for Catholic West Belfast.
12. One particular area which greatly concerned Redpath was education. The standard of educational attainment in the

Shankill - even when measured against the standards in inner-city Catholic West Belfast - was atrocious. In all of the Greater Shankill area last year only 33 children passed the 11 plus examination (the qualifying test for entrance to Grammar Schools). Neither of the two secondary schools in the Shankill area even teach A levels - never mind the children passing the exam. Redpath (who sends his two children to a primary school in the Shankill) was privately advised by the Vice-Principal to take the youngest one out of the school before he was "destroyed" by his fellow-pupils. According to Redpath the most a teacher can do in the Shankill is try to maintain discipline in class; actual teaching is a secondary consideration.

13. Redpath believes that the Government has not yet even recognised the education problem. He feels that the Belfast Education and Library Board is only concerned about the cost of the educational product and not its quality. Its response to the education problem in the Shankill, which is aggravated by a decline in the student population, is to close certain schools and amalgamate them with others (his eldest son is in the course of his third school amalgamation). Redpath was very dismissive of Minister Mawhinney who, he maintained, was simply not interested in the problems of the Shankill. He questioned the utility of the recently announced £4.5m education package of this year's MBW programme which contained two new adult further education "out-centres" in the Shankill. Redpath asserted that the priority should be the proper resourcing of the mainstream education programme for the children of the Shankill who, after all, represent its future.

International Fund for Ireland

14. Redpath said that in the immediate aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Agreement it was not possible for any community groups in Protestant West Belfast to apply for assistance to the

IFI. However, there was no longer any reluctance on the part of his Agency to apply for IFI funding. They intended to put together an application in respect of the LEP scheme they are currently developing and he hoped that it would not transpire that they had missed the boat in terms of the depletion of the Fund's resources.

(iii) Meeting with John Carlin and Des Bannon

15. Carlin and Bannon are both teachers and are involved in Westlink, a local enterprise scheme on Distillery Street in Inner West Belfast. They are also Directors on the WBEB. In addition, Carlin is involved in the Clowney Youth Training Workshop which offers community-based training - funded under the Government YTP - to 16 to 18 year olds. Carlin has just completed a merger of the Clowney Workshop with another community youth training workshop in the Falls (Fallswater). The merged entity is called Workforce Services Ltd.

Job Training

16. Both Bannon and Carlin attach considerable importance to the availability of adequately resourced and good quality job training in order to enhance the employability of school-leavers from West Belfast. They believe they have a good friend in Julian Crozier, the Chief Executive of the recently established Government Training and Employment Agency (TEA). Crozier has already told Carlin that £250,000 has been earmarked by the TEA to construct a new purpose-built training workshop for Workforce Services. Carlin hopes that this new workshop will be able to offer YTP courses, full apprenticeship training and even some vocational training for adults.

17. While this is a positive development, Carlin said that Clowney is experiencing some problems with its current

funding from the DED. The rationalisation of the payment of the training premium by the DED has had an adverse impact on the Clowney cash-flow. If a forthcoming meeting with officials of the DED did not resolve the problem, the community workshop would be forced to approach the Bank to cover the deficit. Carlin said that this type of lack of support from the official agencies made him question why he, and other community people like him, give up so much time in an effort to do something for West Belfast.

IDB

18. Bannon and Carlin were very critical of the IDB and maintained that it had absolutely no interest in West Belfast. (Oddly enough they had not been aware of the two recently announced advance factories to be built in West Belfast). Bannon said that all investment projects were being steered into areas like Carrickfergus and Antrim where there was already zero unemployment. He referred to that evening's Belfast Telegraph which reported on an imminent announcement from the IDB concerning the location of a Japanese car components firm (100 jobs) in Carrickfergus. Carlin said that sometimes it seemed to him that the IDB are deliberately hostile to West Belfast. He referred to a recent presentation which the WBEB made to the Montupet management at their plant in Dunmurry (the purpose of which was to encourage Montupet to recruit their workers from West Belfast). An IDB official present spoke persistently of the vandalism in the plant - which until recently was unoccupied and practically derelict - allegedly carried out by youth from Twinbrook.

- (iv) Meeting with Frank Gaffikin
19. Mr. Gaffikin is an economist who lives in North Belfast and lectures in the University of Ulster in Jordanstown. He specialises in issues of urban renewal and has recently

become associated with the Phoenix Trust.

Making Belfast Work

20. Gaffikin's personal view is that if MBW had been conceived as a pilot programme, the purpose of which was to test certain measures and identify the efficacy of various policies, he would regard its focus and funding to have been about right. However, he believes its current limited scale and modest level of resources prevent it from being a full economic programme which will be able to regenerate West Belfast. He said that, in economic terms, £92.5m over a five year period is not a significant commitment - especially if one bears in mind that the present level of the British Government's annual budget surplus is £14 billion.
21. Gaffikin said that any genuine effort to regenerate West Belfast would have to consider whether the area received its fair share of the mainstream spending programmes (industrial development, environmental, health and social services, education etc.). He is doing some research on this question at present. Through his trade union links, he hopes to plant a number of PQ's which would elicit some information on the levels of mainstream public expenditure in West Belfast. One could then measure it's proportionality against comparable expenditure in Belfast as a whole.
22. Gaffikin also felt it was important, when assessing the adequacy of MBW resources, to take some account of the economic losses to the area which have resulted from the various rationalisation cuts in the mainstream spending programmes. In the social benefits area alone it has been estimated that the loss to the local economy of West Belfast arising from the cuts is in the region of £8m per year.

Castlecourt and the Retail Sector

23. Gaffikin was sceptical about the confidence which the Government was placing in the development of the retail sector. The jobs which would be created in Castlecourt and other retail developments in Belfast City Centre (e.g. the old Gallaghers factory in York Street) would in the main be low-paid, part-time and a substantial proportion would be taken up by women who heretofore were not economically active. Consequently one could not see these jobs making much of an impact on the long-term unemployed.
24. Gaffikin was also doubtful about the long-term economic viability of these retail developments. For the developers they are a risk-free enterprise since they are built with the assistance of substantial Government Urban Development Grants. In addition, in the case of Castlecourt, Gaffikin understands that the Government gave the developer an assurance that, in the event of he not being able to attract sufficient tenants into the Centre, it would fill the gap by locating some of its public offices in Castlecourt. Gaffikin felt that these large retail developments can only succeed if they are sustained by the consumer spending power arising from a sound economic base. The narrowness of the existing manufacturing base in the North (which will, most likely, be aggravated by the slow-down in the British economy) does not in his view augur well for the long-term success of these large retail developments.

Adrian O'Neill

Adrian O' Neill

18 May, 1990.

c/c Mr. Gallagher, Joint Secretary, Ms. Anderson, Mr. Hamill,
Section, Mr. McMahon, Box.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

17 Grosvenor Place,
London SW1X 7HR.Confidential

17 May, 1990.

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Dublin.

Conversation with Jim Marshall MP
Labour Deputy Spokesman on Northern Ireland

Dear Assistant Secretary,

I had dinner on 16 May with Jim Marshall, Kevin McNamara's No. 2 on the Northern Ireland front bench team. Marshall clings on to the most difficult of the four Leicester constituencies, relying on a volatile Asian vote to fend off a very strong Conservative challenge which unseated him by seven votes at the 1983 election. At the 1987 election he retook the seat to which he was first elected in 1974. Something of an enigmatic personality, Marshall is a former research scientist and academic with a Ph.d. in maths who likes to cultivate a low key "cloth cap" common touch approach. Many of his views are on the far left of the party and he admits privately to a deep sense of unease with what he describes as Labour's new "user friendly image" and what he feels is the excessive expediency of much of the party's current policy on economic and social issues.

Some of this comes through also in his approach to his responsibilities on the Northern Ireland team. Although publicly very loyal to McNamara, he told me in very direct terms that he distrusted what he described as McNamara's green tinted perspective. When I quarrelled with this description he said that whatever the reality - and he personally knew that McNamara sought always to pursue an independent line - the perception was that he approached the issues exclusively from a nationalist view point. Marshall implied that McNamara was too close to Dublin and to the SDLP in particular. In Marshall's view a potential future Secretary of State should be more detached so that if and when he found himself in office he would have the necessary freedom of manoeuvre to take hard decisions.

Marshall believed, however, that Kinnock would appoint Kevin McNamara as Secretary of State if Labour made it. He would do so not because of any old political loyalty or friendship but because Kinnock believed in McNamara's approach. This in itself, Marshall contended, was a clear signal of Kinnock's own starting point on the issues.

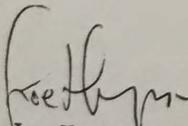
According to Marshall the frontbench team are beginning to reflect on the practical steps that should be taken by them should they find themselves in office. As a first step, McNamara wants to write to all the political parties in Northern Ireland inviting their views. Marshall has apparently vetoed this feeling that they need to do a great deal more groundwork internally first.

Marshall shares with his other junior colleague, Roger Stott, a belief in the efficacy of more jobs and economic aid as the primary means of solving the problem. Marshall however appears to be more sensitive to the broader political context. He emphasised, for example, the need for Labour to develop its links with the Unionists. In this regard he praised the effort of Merlyn Rees and Stan Orme whom he said maintained some "sound friendships" with the Unionists. Interestingly Roy Hughes, whom I met last week, told me that both men are to be seen regularly in the House of Commons tea rooms chatting to various Unionist MPs. According to Hughes (who is no admirer of either) both Merlyn Rees and Stan Orme "appear to be the best friends the Unionists have on either side of the House."

Marshall contended that one way or another there was a likelihood that the Unionists might find themselves in a strong position after the next election. In a tight situation, Marshall was firmly of the view that Neil Kinnock would never budge on essential principles. Nonetheless he said there were many in the Labour party disinterested in Irish affairs who would see little harm in such a situation in engaging the Labour leadership in political horsetrading with the Unionists.

Marshall plans to visit Dublin in early June and would benefit greatly from a comprehensive briefing particularly if we can overcome his inherent resistance to being seen to reflect what he clearly believes to be McNamara's over identification with our point of view.

Yours sincerely,


Joe Hayes
Counsellor



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

17 Grosvenor Place,
London SW1X 7HR.

Confidential

11 May, 1990.

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Dublin.

Conversation with Alex Carlile QC, M.P.

Dear Assistant Secretary,

I had lunch on 16 May with Alex Carlile, Liberal Democrat MP for the Welsh constituency of Montgomery which has a long almost unbroken record of Liberal representation. Carlile has an extensive law practice in London specialising mainly in tax cases but with some high profile criminal work. He masterminded Alan Beith's unsuccessful campaign for leadership of the Liberal Democrats, a fact which continues to colour his uneasy relationship with Ashdown whom he damns with faint praise as "highly photogenic and impossibly enthusiastic."

Carlile is normally the party's spokesman on Northern Ireland. His role is very much an occasional one however since Ashdown continues to make the running on most of the high profile issues.

Extradition

There had always been, he said, a close camaraderie between the Irish and English bars with many professional and social links. There was, he said, among English advocates a deep respect for the independence and mould-breaking attitudes of the Irish superior courts and as a consequence among lawyers at least a good understanding of what the Supreme Court was about in the recent extradition cases or at the very least an acknowledgement that decisions of the Irish Supreme Court would be unreservedly independent and rooted firmly and exclusively in a judicial interpretation of existing law.

The same understanding however could not be expected from the political establishment or British public opinion and he hoped that forthcoming cases under the 1987 Act would go more smoothly since continued misunderstandings about extradition had the capacity to poison the relationship between the two countries in a way that few other issues could.

He spoke in very positive terms of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act which he felt was a most useful piece of legislation. In the present political situation however he doubted if the Prime Minister could be easily persuaded to hand over fugitive offenders to the Irish courts.

Later that afternoon Paddy Ashdown issued a press release - copy attached - endorsing the PD's proposals on extradition and suggesting that these are the result of agreement between the PDs, the Alliance party and the Liberal Democrats. Carlile knew nothing of Ashdown's plans - a good illustration of the nature of the relationship between the two. I spoke to Alison Holmes, Ashdown's principal adviser, who had accompanied Ashdown to Ireland. She told me at some length of the success of their visit and in particular how impressed both she and Ashdown had been with Mr. O'Malley's speech. She indicated however that the press statement was likely to be the extent of the Liberal Democrats efforts on this front for the moment if for no other reason than the need to spread their limited parliamentary exposure in the most effective way in terms of the domestic agenda.

Winchester Three

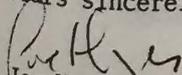
One of the senior counsel involved is in Chambers with Carlile. He said that the legal establishment was appalled at the way the three had handled the media exposure after their acquittal. It created a view that there was some sort of organised IRA campaign to discredit British justice and played into the hands of those in the judicial establishment who were deeply opposed to any further moves on the Birmingham Six.

He was personally convinced that the Birmingham Six were "entirely innocent". He doubted however if the May enquiry would help greatly. Sadly, he said, there were a "very large number of dinosaurs" in the judicial establishment and, according to Carlile, John May is among them. According to Carlile his natural instinct will be to support the status quo". May was no Lord Scarman and many lawyers who hope for a much needed revision of the rules on uncorroborated confessional evidence felt that May was not the man to give the lead.

Northern Ireland

Carlile has visited Northern Ireland on a number of occasions, most recently in early 1989 when he visited the Maze. From his experience as a criminal lawyer one particular difference between loyalist and republican prisoners struck him. The loyalists prisoners whom he met were, he recalled, for the most part similar in personality type to criminals he came in contact with in the course of his practice. Their political sense he found to be crude and poorly expressed. The republican prisoners on the other hand were for the most part entirely different, well disciplined, highly politicised and represented by an articulate spokesman who sought to intimidate him with a list of difficult questions on his political attitudes. He also found many of the republicans to be, as he said, "fanatical, entirely out of touch with reality and in many cases quite mad".

Yours sincerely,


Joe Hayes
Counsellor

1990-05-16 15:34

Liberal Democrats PRESS RELEASE

Parliamentary Party Press Office 01 219 4773
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ALLEN HOLMES



J. Hays

Contact: Alan Leaman (071) 219 6695
Embargo: 11.30am, Wednesday 16th May 1990

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR IRELAND - ASHDOWN

Speaking at a Westminster Press Briefing, Paddy Ashdown MP, leader of the Liberal Democrats, reported on his weekend visit to Northern Ireland and to the Conference of the Progressive Democrats in Galway.

He said:

"Des O'Malley, John Alderdice and I have been discussing the problems of extradition for some months now. That is why I was pleased that I was able to be present when Des O'Malley made his courageous conference speech at the weekend.

"We have agreed a comprehensive set of proposals that would greatly improve the extradition situation. I hope that Mrs Thatcher will accept them. In the past, she has seemed more anxious to tar all the Irish with the same brush, than to encourage those in Ireland who want to improve Anglo-Irish relations and win the fight against terrorism. Mrs Thatcher must realise that she cannot blame the Irish courts for implementing what is the existing law; she must work with those Irish politicians who want to improve the existing law.

"First, the UK government should make more use of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act. This would enable prosecutions to take place in the Republic.

"Second, the British Government should support those, such as the Progressive Democrats within the Irish Government, who are pressing for changes in Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. The territorial claim may well be an aspiration, but, in the current circumstances of Europe, and of Anglo-Irish relations, it cannot continue to be a 'constitutional imperative'.

"And third, the British Government should agree to work for a Community-wide agreement on extradition. This would include the creation of a jurisdiction in the European Court, as a final arbiter in extradition matters.

more follows/.....

"The Progressive Democrats have put forward others proposals for the consolidation of Extradition laws in the Republic, for a clear definition of political crimes and for improvements in the legal procedures. With the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland and the Liberal Democrats in Britain they are working for progress and for peace. .

"I took advantage of my recent visit to assess the opportunities that are now open for successful talks on the devolution of power to Northern Ireland. Peter Brooke has been carefully working behind the scenes to see if all-party talks can get going. He is now running out of time.

"And, as Ireland confronts the opportunities of today, few people will forgive those who reduce the debate to an argument about whether civil servants are on leave or suspended, or whether the Secretariat is in post or disbanded. This Kafka-esque attitude defies belief.

"Mr Brooke's honeymoon is over. He has made some welcome progress. But in a few short months, the build-up to the general election may well overtake any talks. Time should not be lost. And if the political will for talks does not in the end exist, Mr Brooke must be prepared to put forward his own proposals for devolution to Northern Ireland in line with the requirements of the Anglo-Irish Agreement."

ENDS



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

17 Grosvenor Place,
London SW1X 7HR.

Confidential

15 May, 1990.

Mr. Dermot Gallagher,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
Dublin.

Aftermath of the local elections:
Conversations with Conservative and Labour Backbenchers

Dear Assistant Secretary,

I lunched in recent days with Cyril Townsend, Stephen Day and Roy Hughes and had more casual meetings with a number of other backbenchers on both sides of the House. Inevitably the main focus of interest has been on the impact of the local election results.

Townsend (who has Irish links through the Townsend family of Castletownsend) is the long serving Conservative MP for Bexleyheath. A former assistant to Ted Heath, he is active on the centre-left of the party and is openly critical of the more aggressive aspects of Thatcherism. Stephen Day represents the opposite spectrum. One of the 1987 arrivals, Day holds the Yorkshire constituency of Cheadle and shares with many of the new younger MPs on the Government side a public and strident loyalty to Mrs. Thatcher and an unswerving conviction that there should be no turning back. Roy Hughes has held the South Wales Labour stronghold of Newport since 1966 and is a member of the party's strategic Management Committee.

Prior to the local elections even Loyalists like Day were deeply apprehensive convinced that the 20 point opinion poll lead by Labour would translate into a massive defeat for the Government thereby providing the catalyst for the inevitable and long threatened decisive challenge to Mrs. Thatcher's leadership. However, as Labour are now seeking to tell anyone who will listen, there was never any real prospect of a defeat of the magnitude predicted by the polls and the media. Against the swing results in many London boroughs, in particular, dramatic Tory gains in Wandsworth and Westminster, have completely overshadowed substantial Labour gains outside of London including the capture by Labour of the showcase Conservative controlled Bradford. As Roy Hughes explained to me "we won the election but we lost the media battle."

As Labour now ruefully acknowledges strategists at Conservative Central Office out-maneuvered them by focusing public attention on the flagship London boroughs of Westminster and Wandsworth, and to a lesser extent Bradford, as the key tests of the popularity of the Government's Community Charge - the so called "Poll Tax" - thereby ensuring that other widespread Government losses throughout the country have been largely obscured by the victories in Westminster and Wandsworth.

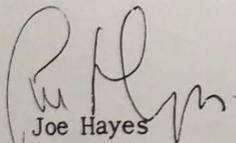
The real loser however is Michael Heseltine whose barely concealed campaign for the leadership prospered in the uncertainty and nervousness that preceded the local elections. The results have greatly strengthened the Prime Minister's hand and she has not been slow to consolidate her position. Since the election Ministers and backbenchers (many of whom were a few days ago openly predicting her departure) have been active in a well orchestrated campaign of support for the Prime Minister's leadership. She herself utilised the opportunity presented by last weekend's Scottish Conservative Conference to further rally the troops and refocus party energies on attacking the Labour party. A further important boost for the Prime Minister and the Government was provided by the announcement that this month's inflation figure did not reach the ten per cent level predicted by the Chancellor, a forecast which further heightened the pre-election gloom. Labour are now suggesting that this too was a carefully stage-managed exercise by Central Office to "turn bad news into good."

In relation to Heseltine's leadership ambitions it is interesting to note that even prior to the local elections Day and several others on the right echoed in equally vehement terms the opinion expressed to me by Ian Gown when I met him on 18 April to the effect that irrespective of the outcome of the local elections any challenge from Michael Heseltine would eventually fail. This confirmed the analysis of Andrew MacKay who told me that the "fatal flaw" in Heseltine's appeal is the narrow base of his support in the parliamentary party where he has so far failed, according to MacKay, to win over any substantial figures on the right of the party apart from Michael Mates who is generally regarded as more of a liability than an asset.

Since the election Heseltine has renewed his efforts to calm speculation about his leadership ambitions going on the record to state that he cannot foresee any circumstances in which he might challenge Mrs. Thatcher directly. Our contacts among the backbenchers emphasise however that he has always said that. The feeling remains that despite his protestations and the set back to his ambition of recent days that he will remain for the foreseeable future a key figure in any assessment of the future direction of the Conservative party.

According to Roy Hughes, Labour's hope is that Mrs. Thatcher will remain in office. Party strategists point, he said, to the boost which the results have given her as an important consolation prize for Labour from their failure to publicly exploit their showing in the local elections. Hughes also stressed that if, as now seems likely, the Prime Minister survives beyond the Autumn, the shortening timescale of the next General Election will apply its own constraints and increasingly rule out the possibility of a leadership contest.

Yours sincerely,



Joe Hayes
Counsellor

AMBASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



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PLEASE NOTE: Effective May 6, 1990
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Confidential

15 May 1990

Mr. Dermot Gallagher
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division

Dear Assistant Secretary

Brooke and the Unionists: conversations with journalists

In conversations I have had with journalists today, one or two points arose which you may find of interest.

Frank Millar rang me following the publication of his two pieces in today's Irish Times. He commented that the paper's leader which accompanied his material "got it wrong" by giving the impression that Brooke deserved sole credit for the proposal now put to the Unionists. This is clearly a joint approach by the two Governments which has been carefully elaborated in the lengthy talks between them. Furthermore, the notion of Irish Government involvement from the outset in any future talks is clearly one which the Irish side, rather than Brooke, would have pushed. If, as Millar's sources tell him, this formed part of the proposal put to the Unionists by Brooke, it suggests that the Irish Government had its way with Brooke (who would have instinctively preferred not to have to raise this matter at this stage) and that the role played by the Irish side in the talks with Brooke was far more active than that indicated in the Irish Times leader.

Millar himself needs no persuasion on the logic of the Irish Government's position. As he indicated in his column today, it is clear that, if there is to be an alternative agreement, the Irish Government must be a party to it and must be fully involved in the negotiation of it. Prior to the revelation about Brooke's proposal (which, in an oblique way, he attributed to Molyneaux), Millar had heard a rumour that there might be some form of "trade-off" between direct involvement for the Irish

Government in future negotiations and substantial concessions by Dublin on Maryfield. He was, therefore, not entirely surprised to find that the question of Dublin's involvement in future talks featured in the proposal made by Brooke.

Millar believes that neither Unionist party has any difficulty with the notion of Dublin taking part in talks on (a) the North/South dimension (relations between a future NI administration and the Republic); and (b) the East/West dimension (the "totality of relations", as Millar put it). As regards participation in the "internal talks", this is absolutely out for the DUP. However, Millar senses a grudging acceptance among some senior OUP members that Dublin could have an indirect involvement (not specified) in such talks. He thought that they had in mind some arrangement which would enable Dublin to be kept informed of progress.

All of this, of course, is contingent on the Unionist leaders accepting some compromise formula on the Secretariat. Millar has no indication so far of any readiness on their part to do so. Peter Robinson told him recently that he did not expect the two leaders to accept any "fudge" on the Secretariat. (Robinson indicated to Millar, however, that he himself could buy a "fudge", even one involving no redeployment of officials).

In a conversation today, Richard Ford (of the Times) speculated that the Unionist leaders may have deliberately leaked the content of the Brooke proposal to Frank Millar in an effort to wreck it, or at least to undermine it. He calculated that, if the Unionists were seriously committed to what Brooke was outlining, they would have preserved silence about it. Widely believed to have no interest in the talks Brooke is trying to engineer, Molyneaux is probably searching for a pretext to refuse Unionist involvement. He may have reasoned that it would be easier to explain a negative stance to Unionist voters with reference to the close involvement envisaged for Dublin in future talks, as divulged via the Irish Times.

Ford also mentioned that Molyneaux reportedly remarked to a colleague in the last few days that, if there were to be three sets of talks, he would prefer if the internal set were to be left to the end. Ford, who could not see the logic of this, read it as yet another attempt by Molyneaux to stall on internal talks.

In a conversation today, Des McCartan (of the Belfast Telegraph) took a similar line. He also believes that the Unionist leaders have no intention of getting involved in talks. The optimistic view of events which they presented at their press conference last Friday was "sheer window-dressing". Partly with an eye to this week's bye-election, they wished to give Unionist voters an impression that the OUP/DUP strategy is finally paying off as the two Governments begin to move in their direction. The Secretariat, however, remains the major stumbling-block and privately, McCartan believes, both Molyneaux and Paisley realise that they are not going to get what they want on it.

The NIO, McCartan mentioned, were a little taken aback by the upbeat, buoyant attitude struck by the two leaders at their press conference. One NIO official commented to McCartan that, if they were serious about what they had just heard from Brooke, they would have "gone away quietly" and said little or nothing to the media.

McCartan understands that no date has yet been fixed for the Unionists' next meeting with Brooke, though Thursday 24 May has been talked about.

Yours sincerely

David Donoghue

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Press and Information Officer

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Confidential

11 May 1990

Mr. Dermot Gallagher
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division

Dear Assistant Secretary

Lunch with George Brock, The Times

Brock is the Foreign Editor of the Times and the paper's leader-writer on Irish affairs.

The following points of interest arose:

Talks about talks

- Brock was very sceptical about the prospects for political movement in Northern Ireland. The continuing intransigence demonstrated by Molyneux earlier this week in his reiteration of the Unionist demands suggests strongly that nothing will come of Peter Brooke's current efforts. Molyneux and Paisley have no serious interest in talking about devolution. They are merely "playing games" and Brooke will realise this sooner or later.
- The caution displayed by Dublin all along in relation to the present exercise is well-judged. (Brock observed that this caution was again evident in the Taoiseach's Dail reply this week). While it is understandable that any incoming Secretary of State for NI will want to explore the prospects for political dialogue, Brooke's initiative looks no more promising than those of his predecessors. Both Governments, Brock commented, should proceed with particular caution and the lowest possible expectations.

Mrs Thatcher and the Agreement

- On a more general note, Brock suggested that successive Secretaries of State in NI have found it difficult to resist pursuing political initiatives of this kind because the job basically "gives them

nothing to do". Mrs Thatcher sends them to Belfast with a mandate purely to "contain" the problem. Practising politicians, however, are apt to get restless with a purely administrative role and to cast around for something else to do.

- The difficulty goes back to Margaret Thatcher's approach to the NI problem. She never had much interest in it to begin with. She spotted in the Agreement an opportunity to get it off her agenda - if not permanently, then at least for long intervals at a time. The Agreement may not have satisfied all her expectations but it serves a useful purpose by "keeping the lid" on a volatile situation. Her limited interest in the problem has, Brock believes, declined further in recent years and she will take no further significant action in relation to NI during the remainder of her term in office. Her Ministers, therefore, have the unattractive chore of simply "keeping things ticking over", a job which some of them clearly find frustrating.

Extradition

- We had a detailed discussion of this issue, on which Brock has written critical leaders in the past.
- He accepted that the position taken by the Taoiseach in relation to the 1987 Act is "absolutely sensible". While he objected strongly at the time to the safeguards introduced in that Act, the ability of the Act to ensure effective extradition arrangements cannot be questioned until relevant cases have come before the Irish courts.
- His basic concern, however, is that extradition could eventually prove the undoing of the Agreement. Successive extradition controversies could "poison" the Agreement by exposing Irish distrust of the British courts and eroding the mutual goodwill and trust on which, he believes, the Agreement must rest. While he accepts that the Irish authorities cooperated fully with the British requests in the three recent cases, he noted a recent poll suggesting that only 31% of the Republic's population favours extradition. If in time a hardening of public opinion against extradition manifested itself at political level, very real difficulties would arise for Anglo-Irish relations.
- I asked Brock why the British Government had made so little use of the CLJA, which seemed a sensible solution to the problem of fugitive offenders. He suggested that the Prime Minister might be anxious to avoid giving any impression that she accepts Irish criticisms of the British courts. Fundamentally, however, "you have a point" and the British ought to be making much greater use of this legislation.

The Birmingham and Winchester cases

- On the Birmingham Six, Brock observed that the safety of these convictions has now been called very seriously into question. The British Government cannot continue to "duck this case"; some action, he believes, will be taken on it within the next year or two.

- As regards the Winchester Three, the view taken by Brock and many of his colleagues at the time was that, while the defendants were probably guilty of something, the evidence presented in court fell well short of demonstrating a conspiracy to murder. The recent outcome was, therefore, satisfying, even if the grounds for the acquittal would have surprised most observers.

The Taoiseach and the EC Presidency

- I raised with Brock a profile of the Taoiseach which he contributed to the Times on the morning of the recent European Council meeting in Dublin. I criticised this piece on grounds of both tone and content.
- In response, Brock was complimentary about the Taoiseach's handling of the European Council meeting and apologetic about many aspects of the profile, which he had prepared in haste.

Yours sincerely

David Donoghue

David Donoghue
Press and Information Officer

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END of file