

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2014/32/1928
Creation Date(s):	14 November 1984
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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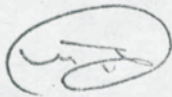
Discussion with Sammy Wilson, DUP Press Officer
on 13 November, 1984

1. Mr. Wilson said that the forthcoming Summit created apprehension in Unionist ranks. There were real fears on the Unionist side that private negotiations were taking place on Northern Ireland's future. He hoped that the Summit would have a low-key outcome. The DUP will resolutely oppose any initiative which takes place such as the Parliamentary Tier. They would not however boycott the Assembly on such an issue. Their view is that it is all the more important to support the Assembly at "a time of crisis". Mr. Wilson echoed the comments of my OUP contacts in saying that there could be no developments in Northern Ireland towards devolved government until it was clear whether or not anything was going to emerge from the Anglo-Irish process.
2. According to Mr. Wilson once it was clear that there would be no substantive British response to the Forum there would be a concerted attempt by the OUP, DUP and Alliance to obtain devolved government. The reaction among DUP supporters to their policy document had been very positive. There is an anxiety to make progress towards devolved government and in doing so to display some flexibility to the SDLP. If the SDLP do not wish to come in then the DUP, OUP and Alliance can do a deal. He repeated a point made in an earlier conversation that the DUP would be happy to form a constructive opposition to a coalition comprising the OUP, Alliance or even the SDLP. This he stressed was a major change in DUP thinking.
3. A further indication of the current mood in the party is according to Mr. Wilson the virtual certainty that George Seawright will be expelled. His recent activities have put him beyond what the DUP is prepared to tolerate.

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4. He was at the meeting at which Pascal O'Hare walked out because of Rhodes Boyson's refusal to meet Sinn Fein. He frankly admitted that the Minister had taken the OUP and DUP off the hook. If he had agreed to meet Sinn Fein they probably would have walked out. Politicians at local level were however in a difficult situation. Council regulations permit each party in a district council to have representation on sub-committees and it needs a two-thirds majority to change the regulations and the Unionists would only have a two-thirds majority in councils where there is no Sinn Fein problem. The OUP and DUP are therefore forced to work on sub-committees with Sinn Fein. The problem will become much worse after next May. Mr. Wilson feels that Sinn Fein must be ostracised and the only way to do this effectively is to ban them. He professed a higher respect for our willingness to deal sternly with Sinn Fein than the British who are sitting on the fence in the futile hope of moving them away from violence. They should be totally banned unless they renounce violence.

5. We agreed to keep in touch. Mr. Wilson indicated that the party leadership was aware that these contacts were taking place and did not disapprove. It was clear however that Paisley himself would not be prepared to engage in such meetings.



Martin Burke

14 November, 1984

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