



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Discussions with John Hume

The following issues arose in recent discussions with John Hume.

Duisburg Initiative

The convener of last year's Duisburg meeting, Eberhard Spiecker, arranged to meet Hume in Strasbourg recently and indicated that he would like to renew his initiative in the coming months. He had drafted a new discussion paper for this purpose and handed over a copy of it to Hume (attached). This envisages, inter alia, "the freezing" of the constitutional issue until the year 2,000, when a new constitution for the North and its relationship with Britain and the Republic would be drafted and voted on in a referendum. In the intervening period up to the year 2,000, the North would be governed by a powersharing caretaker Government.

Hume's view (which we would share) is that Spiecker, though well-meaning, is quite naive. Hume also, and rightly, sees danger in allowing talks between political parties to be convened and coordinated by an outsider, rather than by the parties themselves. The SDLP and the two unionist parties, for instance, had little or no control over the leaks and publicity which emerged from Duisburg and which seem to have been largely orchestrated - for its own ends - by the Alliance Party.

Hume is also rather concerned about the Ulster Hall meeting next week which is designed to help give political dialogue, and especially devolution, a new impetus. This meeting will bring together Austin Currie, Ken Maginnis, Sammy Wilson of the DUP, Gordon Mawhinney of Alliance and Seamus Lynch of the Workers Party. Hume is particularly angry that Currie accepted an invitation to this meeting without consulting him. He now actively distrusts Currie on the devolution question and believes that the positive (if superficial) publicity which Currie received from his Duisburg involvement has "gone to his head".

### Mawhinney Consultation

Brian Mawhinney, who has been given the task by Tom King of sounding out the possibilities for political movement in the North, asked to see Hume recently. The resultant meeting was in very general terms. Hume is quite convinced that the initiative is going nowhere. In addition, we are aware that the general Unionist view is that, if King had succeeded in identifying any prospects for movement, he would not have given responsibility for advancing matters to somebody with as little credibility across the board as Mawhinney.

### UVF Meeting

Hume had a meeting recently with three members of the UVF (including Gusty Spence). They argued for a suspension of the Agreement and said that if this happened, and was followed by negotiations between the parties, they would suspend their military campaign (largely sectarian assassinations). They went on to suggest that if full suspension were not possible, consideration might be given to the Conference restricting its operations, while talks were underway, to cross-border issues. Hume repeated his view that the more honest and effective way to get talks underway was not to tamper with the Agreement but rather for Unionists to enter into talks with the publicly-stated objective of seeking to overturn or replace the Agreement.

### Local Elections

Hume does not see the elections as changing the existing status quo to any significant degree. He is, however, very worried about the disorganised state of the SDLP in West Belfast and he was (for the first time) extremely critical of Joe Hendron. In this regard, he seems to be giving some thought to 'replacing Hendron with Brian Feeney as SDLP leader in Belfast.

Aer Lingus flights to Derry

Hume, with the support of local businessmen (in particular Willie McArthur from Buncrana), has been trying to interest Aer Lingus in flying into Eglinton. The idea is that they would operate the same "link-up system" to Derry as they already do to Sligo and Galway. McArthur recently arranged for two senior Aer Lingus staff to visit Derry. While they were apparently well disposed to seeing a service being started up, they indicated to Hume that they would need a "political signal" from the Government before being able to take the matter further. Hume said that he would be personally very grateful if the Taoiseach would be prepared to consider indicating to Aer Lingus that, providing the commercial aspects were satisfactory, he would be happy to see the airline flying into Derry.

McArthur, whom I also met in Derry recently, told me he was particularly appreciative of a letter he had received from the Taoiseach indicating that he would consider opening an extension to McArthur's factory in Buncrana in the near future.

McArthur's industry, which is now a joint venture with an American company, has increased its workforce from 300 to 1,500 in the recent past and expects to be employing 2,500 within a few months. McArthur comes from a traditional Derry Unionist family which decided to establish a factory in Buncrana in the early 1930s.

*28*  
~~Dermot~~ Gallagher,  
28 April, 1989.

cc: Mr. Nally  
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Discussion Paper

The main constitutional Parties in Northern Ireland agree on a temporary solution for a transition period until the year 2000. This period would enable trust to be established between the Parties and allow a process of pacification to take place.

- 1.- A caretaker government to be formed, responsible for all departments, except for foreign affairs and defence.

This government would consist of 10 members, 4 of whom from the OUP and 3 each from DUP and SDLP; the Deputy Chief Executive to come from the SDLP.

The government is to be appointed by the Northern Ireland Secretary of State according to the proposals of the main constitutional Parties in Northern Ireland.

- 2.- The British and Irish governments set up a Greater Isles Council, made up of the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the caretaker government as well as one member each from the British and Irish governments. The Greater Isles Council is to be responsible for all questions of common interest.

- 3.- According to the structure of the caretaker government and taking into account the experience which this government would have gained from its work, it will submit by 1st January, 2000 basic questions (considerations) for the drafting of a constitution. These questions will be concerned with the internal structure of Northern Ireland as well as the relationship with Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. The proposal of these questions by the caretaker government must be made unanimously.

The Northern Ireland population will decide on the basic questions by means of a referendum. Then a constitutional assembly will be elected which has to work out a constitution.

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- 4.- The caretaker government has the right to shorten the transition period and bring forward the date for the referendum.

According to the progress made in co-operation the caretaker government is free to suggest to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State the participation of further Northern Ireland Parties in the caretaker government and if necessary to create a Parliamentary advisory body to which all Northern Ireland Parties should belong.

Duisburg-Hamborn, 31st March, 1989

*F. G. L.*