



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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*Mr. O'Keefe, Ambassador - Mr. McLaughlin*  
*To Mr. O'Keefe*  
*6 page copy for Strasbourg file*  
*13-12-88*

**ROINN AN TAOISIGH**

Subject to verification

Misc.  
F. 2.

Uimhir.....

**SECRET**

European Council, Strasbourg, 8th and 9th December 1989

Taoiseach's meeting with the British Prime Minister,  
Mrs Thatcher

The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister met in the British Delegation Rooms in the Palais de la Musique et des Congres (PMC) in Strasbourg. The Prime Minister was accompanied by her Private Secretary, Mr Charles Powell. The undersigned accompanied the Taoiseach. The meeting lasted from approximately 12.45 p.m. to 1.15 p.m. on 9th December. A copy of the agreed joint communique, issued at the end of the meeting, is attached.

The meeting began with some general comments about the arrangements for the Council and the Prime Minister's recent appearance on the Dimpleby television show where, the Taoiseach commented, she had come off best. Her reply was that he had deserved it: the media seemed to be interested only in conflict but it is not by conflict that the world progresses.

The Taoiseach then went on to say that he regarded the Prime Minister's attitude at the Conference as being very reasonable. The Prime Minister responded that she could go along with most things except the Social Charter. It was not that. It was just a charter for unemployment. The Taoiseach responded that at this stage it was only a declaration. The Prime Minister's view was that it would be taken as a basis for further departures and that the Commission would build on it to implement measures which would put up costs and destroy employment in Europe.

The Taoiseach said that some passages in the Charter on compulsory vocational training worried us. The Prime Minister said that this was the way the Charter operated: they wanted to make the Commission capable of interfering in all sorts of ways. The Taoiseach said that the principle of subsidiarity applied and that this should be some protection. The Prime Minister said that this would be merely lip service. She had spent the last ten years in trying to reduce the power of the trade unions. The last thing she wanted was to see them back again on company boards. The Taoiseach's comment was that in British conditions, the measures she had taken were possible: with us, they were not. The Prime Minister then went on to say that the Charter was what Kohl wanted.

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He wanted to inflict high German social and other costs on other countries in the Community so that German industry could continue its expansion. The more other countries could slow work on the Charter the better. The Portuguese were against it. The Spanish - Mr Gonzales - had many doubts. He had a lot of trouble with his trade unions. He was not sure which way to go.

The Taoiseach then went on to say that he must mention the Birmingham Six. The arguments for re-opening the case were unanswerable. He ~~recognised~~ <sup>felt</sup> the British position but felt that some way must be found in which the case could be reviewed. The Prime Minister said that it had been before the Court of Appeal once and had been the subject of a very extensive judgement, every word of which she had read. They could not interfere with the courts. The Taoiseach said that he knew the British position but felt at the same time there must be some way in which the case could be dealt with to everybody's satisfaction. Each of the two countries had its own position.

The Prime Minister then went on to say that otherwise we must continue the battle on security - there have not been many successes recently. The Taoiseach said that we must continue as best we can. The people in Northern Ireland appear to be satisfied - the Prime Minister responded that we can't ever be satisfied while terrorism continues. The terrorists seem to have access to colossal amounts of explosives. The Taoiseach said they had got a big consignment of Semtex from somewhere a while ago. He asked if she knew of talks among the paramilitaries. These may be nothing more than talks to delineate their respective territories.

Prime Minister:

Yes - they want to carve up their areas of violence. We must do everything we can to improve the situation before another 10 or 15 persons are murdered.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement seems to be alright. We are going to have a go at devolution once again. The politicians are alright around the table. They will talk forever. But when you come to a point of action they disappear and the whole thing breaks down.

Taoiseach:

I met Mr Brooke recently. He is deeply involved in his job. He is a very good man.

Prime Minister:

He is a man of integrity - totally fearless.

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Taoiseach: He loves to talk about history and his connections with Ireland.

There then followed some conversation in response to the Prime Minister's question as to how we were going to tackle the Presidency. The Taoiseach mentioned his interest in the German question.

Prime Minister: All Germans are nationalists.

Taoiseach: The Chancellor mentioned his ten points again last night. He is sticking to them.

Prime Minister: It is vital that Germany be anchored in the Community. With unity, it could be bigger than France, Italy, Spain together. I am sorry for Gorbachev. He doesn't want Germany unity. Neither do I. Even as things are, Germany has a balance of trade surplus with every country in the Community -

Taoiseach: Except with Ireland! We have a trade surplus with Germany. What about the CSCE as a framework? The provision there that existing borders shall not be violated is valuable.

At this point the Prime Minister produced a map showing Germany as it had been before the last war, as it is now, and the NATO frontline. Germany, before the last war, was vast in area in comparison with its present size.

At this point Powell intervened to say that the interpretation of the German courts was important. The CDU in Germany don't accept the Oder/Neisse line and it is not at all certain that Kohl accepts it either. The Prime Minister said attitudes are becoming more and more Germanic. He is like a bulldozer. East Germans are flooding into his country. His attitude now seems to be "no-one can tell us what to do". We are not certain what will happen in the GDR. There are 325,000 Soviet troops stationed there.

Powell: Yes - and there are incursions into the Russian camps. There are records that within the last 48 hours Soviet military bases have been invaded.

Taoiseach: In a situation like that anything can happen.

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Prime  
Minister:

There was hell in Dresden recently.

Taoiseach:

The whole situation is very tricky.

Prime  
Minister:

It would be necessary, for a start, to slow down any action plan on the Social Charter. We can't have more regulations on part-time work or night-time work.

Taoiseach:

Part-time work is essential for many of the weaker sections in the community. We must keep in touch.

Prime  
Minister:

And then keeping incomes up will create more unemployment.

Taoiseach:

We will have to open negotiations with EFTA during our Presidency.

Prime  
Minister:

We will need to clock up another 50 or 60 directives on the Single Market. The French will clear up anything that's ready.

Taoiseach:

What are your views on the Bank?

Prime  
Minister:

The Bank is not necessary. There is no shortage of money to borrow. The real shortage is of worthwhile projects to finance. Mitterrand came up in Paris with this proposal for another loan. I never heard anything about that. They can't pay what they already owe. Why are we giving them more loans?

Taoiseach:

Gonzales and I were put in a spot. We didn't know anything about another loan! Mitterrand said it at the press conference.

Prime  
Minister:

We have given a lot of money already. Delors wants this. We will have to watch him like a hawk. We want a Single Market but Germany resists.

Taoiseach:

We are anxious to see further developments on transport.

Prime  
Minister:

Kohl resists movement on insurance and financial services. These are among the touchstones of progress.

# ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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Taoiseach: Kohl is concerned about getting into the EFTA markets.

Prime Minister: - referring to "this wretched EMU idea" - We haven't a budget deficit. We want exchange rate stability within the ERM but most intervention in world trade is done with the dollar or the yen. Kohl will pitch for control by the Bundesbank. Spain, France, Portugal, Italy will want "democratic" control: and this will mean more inflation. Then the European Parliament will also be looking for a say. Nobody gives a damn about the European Parliament. It is not a Parliament at all. It is an assembly.

At this point there was some discussion of the draft communique to be issued after the meeting. A minor amendment, on security co-operation, was made and the communique was agreed.

There was also some further confidential discussion on arrangements for the Dublin Summit.

Dermot Nally

11 December 1989.

c.c. Mr Noel Dorr, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs.



~~DRAFT~~

As issued

Joint Communique

11/12

The Taoiseach Mr. Charles J. Haughey and the Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher had a bilateral meeting in Strasbourg on Saturday 9 December 1989 on the occasion of the European Council. {The meeting lasted about half an hour}.

During the meeting, they discussed the forthcoming Irish Presidency of the European Community and reviewed some of the major issues which will arise.

They discussed bilateral issues and welcomed the establishment of the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group.

They also reviewed the situation in relation to Northern Ireland, and the prospects for political progress. They were agreed in their condemnation of violence and their determination constantly to strengthen their cooperation against it, as well as the possibilities that would open up if violence were to end.

The meeting was constructive and cordial.

9<sup>th</sup> December 1989

Briefing Points for Taoiseach's Meeting  
with Mrs. Thatcher

Birmingham Six

The Taoiseach might wish to say that the decision on the Guildford Four was widely welcomed in Ireland. The fact that the system had the capacity to correct a miscarriage of justice was particularly and favourably commented on. The Taoiseach had taken the opportunity to say this publicly at the time.

We have always been concerned about the three cases which dated from the beginning of the IRA campaign in Britain. Two of the three (the Guildford Four and the Maguire family) were now well on the way to being definitively resolved. There remained only the Birmingham Six. The re-opening and resolution of this case would have an enormously positive impact on Anglo-Irish relations. The Taoiseach might wish to alert the Prime Minister to the great sensitivity of the case; it will be discussed in detail by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Home Secretary when they meet shortly.

Dialogue with Unionists

While the Anglo-Irish Agreement is working quite satisfactorily, in all its aspects, there is at the same time widespread frustration at the lack of political movement. A first objective, in moving matters forward, might be to try and create a situation where it would be quite normal to have a regular dialogue and regular meetings between all the constitutional parties, both within Northern Ireland and on the island as a whole.

The major stumbling block to political progress to date has been the unwillingness of Unionists to enter into dialogue with the SDLP, and indeed with the two Governments. The Taoiseach might say that he was hoping that we would be able to use our



Presidency to establish some public relationship with the Unionists, in a non-political and non-controversial (i.e. exclusively European) context. He had already issued an invitation to the three Northern MEPs to meet him in his capacity as President of the Council. While there had been no formal response to date, the indications were that, in the case of the Official Unionist Party, the response was likely to be positive. It could only be helpful to the common objectives of both Governments if progress, however limited, could be made over the next six months in bringing the Unionists back into normal political activity.

Peter Brooke

The Taoiseach might also like to say that he had a useful discussion with the new Secretary of State before the last Conference meeting in Dublin.

British-Irish Interparliamentary Body

The Taoiseach might like to mention his satisfaction that the Body will have its first meeting in London in February. This can only be helpful to the atmosphere in which debates on Anglo-Irish issues are conducted in both Parliaments.

Issues likely to be raised by Mrs. Thatcher

In line with her usual focus on security-related issues, Mrs. Thatcher is likely to refer to the level of terrorist activity and the operation of extradition arrangements. The Taoiseach might refer to the high level of cross-border cooperation on security issues, recent further arms finds by the Gardai, follow-on arrests and arms finds in Europe some time ago arising from the arrest of two IRA personnel at Rosslare, and the satisfaction expressed by the British Attorney General (who recently visited Dublin) with the recent operation of extradition arrangements.

Birmingham Six

The attached message to the Minister from the British Foreign Secretary was delivered yesterday evening.

A number of points may be worth noting:

- the timing of the letter, immediately before the Strasbourg meeting between the Taoiseach and Mrs. Thatcher, is significant - it is presumably designed to influence the terms in which the Taoiseach raises the issue with the Prime Minister;
- the letter implies, without making any explicit promise to this effect, that decategorisation is imminent (Note: this is an issue on which the Minister has pressed the Home Secretary);
- it seems clear, from the reference to the European Parliament, that the British authorities are embarrassed and concerned about the Resolution on the Birmingham Six recently adopted by the Parliament;
- the general impression created by the final paragraph of the message (and the London Embassy has recently reported pointers in this direction) is that the British authorities are casting around for a way to resolve the Birmingham Six case.

AA.

7 December, 1989.

cc: PSM  
PSS  
Counsellors A-I

Mr. Nally  
Mr. Mathews  
Dr. Mansergh  
Mr. Brosnan

CONFIDENTIAL



BRITISH EMBASSY,  
DUBLIN.

6 December 1989

*gm. 620p 6/12/89*  
Mr John Kirwan  
Private Secretary to the  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
Dublin 2

Dear John,

I have been asked to forward the attached message on the Birmingham Six to Mr Collins from Mr Hurd. I should be grateful if you would ensure that Mr Collins receives this before he leaves with the Taoiseach for the European Council at Strasbourg.

*Yours sincerely,*

*Jeremy Thorpe*

J W Thorp  
Charge d'Affaires

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MESSAGE FROM MR DOUGLAS HURD MP, FOREIGN SECRETARY, TO MR GERARD COLLINS TD,  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BEGINS

I UNDERTOOK TO KEEP YOU INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS ON THE BIRMINGHAM SIX WHEN WE MET ON 27 NOVEMBER. YOU ALSO WROTE TO ME ABOUT THEIR CASE ON 17 NOVEMBER.

ON THE PARTICULAR POINT YOU RAISED, THE TRANSFER OF TWO OF THE BIRMINGHAM SIX PRISONERS AWAY FROM LONDON WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE OF THE DECISION THAT WORMWOOD SCRUBS SHOULD NO LONGER FORM PART OF THE DISPERSAL SYSTEM FOR HIGH CATEGORY PRISONERS. MR MCILKENNY, WHO IS AT PRESENT DETAINED AT FULL SUTTON, NEAR YURK, HAS PETITIONED FOR A TRANSFER. THE MATTER IS BEING CONSIDERED. MR POWER ALSO ASKED TO BE MOVED TO LONDON, IN ORDER TO RECEIVE VISITS. HE ARRIVED BACK AT WORMWOOD SCRUBS ON 30 NOVEMBER AND WILL STAY THERE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE RETURNING NORTH.

WHEN WE MET YOU REFERRED TO THE ANXIETY EXPRESSED IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND ABOUT THE SECURITY CATEGORISATION OF THE SIX MEN. CATEGORISATION REMAINS UNDER REGULAR REVIEW AND I UNDERSTAND THAT A DECISION ON THE LATEST REVIEW IS LIKELY VERY SHORTLY.

THERE IS ONE OTHER POINT WHICH I SHOULD MENTION. I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN A WELCOME TO THE RECENT DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO ASK ITS LEGAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO THE CONVICTIONS OF THE SIX. IN OUR VIEW IT WOULD BE WRONG FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO UNDERTAKE THIS. THE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO THE BIRMINGHAM SIX CASE BY THE COURT OF APPEAL LEAVES THE GOVERNMENT WITH NO OPTION BUT TO ACCEPT THE COURT'S JUDGMENT. IT WOULD BE WRONG FOR ANY DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND TO POLITICAL PRESSURE ON A MATTER WHICH IS FOR THE COURTS TO DECIDE. THIS WAS A POINT WHICH I THINK YOU ACKNOWLEDGED WHEN WE MET. SO I DO NOT THINK THAT AN INITIATIVE BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IS LIKELY TO PROVE USEFUL OR HELPFUL.

I KNOW THAT THE RECENT DECISION OF THE COURT OF APPEAL IN THE GUILDFORD AND WOOLWICH CASES HAS GIVEN RISE TO CONCERN ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THE BIRMINGHAM CONVICTIONS. BUT THE BIRMINGHAM CASE IS DIFFERENT, AND IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT THE DECISION TAKEN IN ONE MUST INEVITABLY LEAD TO THE REOPENING OF THE OTHER. DAVID WADDINGTON IS ALWAYS READY, AS I WAS AS HOME SECRETARY, TO CONSIDER NEW EVIDENCE OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF SUBSTANCE WHICH HAVE NOT ALREADY BEEN PUT BEFORE THE COURTS. SIR JOHN MAY IS CONDUCTING A JUDICIAL ENQUIRY ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE TRIALS OF THE GUILDFORD FOUR AND THE MAGUIRE FAMILY. HE HAS WIDE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WILL NO DOUBT GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO ANY GENERAL LESSONS WHICH CAN BE LEARNT FROM THOSE CASES. AN ENQUIRY IS ALSO BEING CONDUCTED BY OFFICERS OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE INTO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WEST MIDLANDS SERIOUS CRIME SQUAD. THIS RELATES TO ACTIONS BY THE CRIME SQUAD SINCE JANUARY 1986; BUT THE OFFICERS ARE NOT PRECLUDED FROM PURSUING A LINE OF ENQUIRY BEFORE THAT DATE IF THIS APPEARS TO BE JUSTIFIED IN THE LIGHT OF THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION. IF THERE WERE ANY FRESH DOUBT ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THE CONVICTIONS OF THE BIRMINGHAM SIX, I KNOW THE HOME SECRETARY WOULD CONSIDER FURTHER INTERVENTION.