



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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PM, AS, *Thurschig*
CC *of A Sec Galtmyle* (Mc Kannon)
GIS. (Mc O Galtmyle).
A-1. (1st Sec)

PV
E-A DUBLIN
F-A1 LDN

SERIAL NO. 476
UNCLASSIFIED

IMMEDIATE

14 AUGUST 1939

TO HQ FROM LONDON
FOR JOE HAYES (PRESS SECTION) FROM FARRELL/O'NEILL

COVERAGE OF 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF BRITISH TROOPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

1. THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF BRITISH TROOPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAS, PREDICTABLY, BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY MUCH MEDIA "HYPE" HERE IN BOTH THE PRINT AND BROADCASTING MEDIA. COVERAGE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD WITH RESUMES, OVERVIEWS, "THEN AND NOW" PIECES AND A NUMBER OF EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES. WITH ONE EXCEPTION THE DAILY MIRROR, ALL THE EDITORIAL AND MAJOR FEATURE ARTICLES COME OUT STRONGLY IN FAVOUR OF KEEPING BRITISH TROOPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE COMMON LINE IN THE COVERAGE HAS BEEN TO ASK WHETHER THE 1969 DECISION WAS JUSTIFIED AND WHETHER NOW. THE ANGLO IRISH AGREEMENT IS NOT A CENTRAL ELEMENT IN THE COVERAGE.

2. THE MIRROR, IN A LEADER SIGNED BY ROBERT MAXWELL HIMSELF ARGUES THAT THERE CAN BE NO PEACE WHILE TROOPS REMAIN. THE EDITORIAL ASSERTS THAT BRITISH SHOULD WITHDRAW AND COMPEL THE PEOPLE NORTH AND SOUTH TO WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD A NEW AND PEACEFUL NATION.

3. THIS VIEW IS GIVEN SHORT SHRIFT IN OTHER EDITORIALS WITH, EG THE EXPRESS, AND THE SUNN EXPRESSING FEARS OF GREATLY INCREASED VIOLENCE WERE THE TROOPS TO GO. MORE CONSIDERED COMMENT IS TO BE FOUND IN EDITORIALS IN THE INDEPENDENT GUARDIAN, TIMES, AND FINANCIAL TIMES.

4. THE INDEPENDENT (12.3) IN A LEADER ENTITLED "NO CASE FOR PULLING OUT TROOPS" SAYS THAT THE BEST STRATEGY IS TO CONSOLIDATE THOSE GAINS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE AND TO REFRAIN FROM DRAMATIC INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE ANGLO IRISH AGREEMENT WHICH ALIENATED THE MAJORITY AND "MAY HAVE GIVEN THE IRA THE FALSE IMPRESSION THAT WITHDRAWAL WAS AT HAND".

5. THE LEADER IN TODAY'S GUARDIAN SAYS THAT IT IS CLEAR THAT

PEACE WILL ONLY COME THROUGH GRADUAL EVOLUTION RATHER THAN THROUGH INSPIRATIONAL MASTERSTROKES. IT DECLARES THAT THE "YUKE" OF THE AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIFTED FROM THE PROTESTANTS. THROUGH THE AGREEMENT A KIND OF "BALANCE OF DISAPPOINTMENT" HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN BOTH COMMUNITIES. THIS DOES NOT HAVE TO MEAN STALEMATE AS THERE ARE SIGNS THAT UNDER THIS DISCIPLINE POLITICIANS IN BOTH COMMUNITIES (E.G. PETER ROBINSON) ARE EDGING TOWARDS A NON-TRIBAL POLITICS.

6. TODAY'S FINANCIAL TIMES SAYS THAT WHILE THE MAIN PURPOSE OF

KEEPING THE TROOPS IN N.I. IS TO COMBAT THE IRA, CONTAINMENT, EVEN IF IT IS ACHIEVABLE IS NOT ENOUGH. DISCRIMINATION STILL EXISTS IN HOUSING AND JOBS AND WHILE MOVES TO ELIMINATE IT WILL NOT KILL OFF THE IRA OVERNIGHT, THEY SHOULD NEVERTHELESS BE MADE. INDIFFERENCE TO NORTHERN IRELAND IN BRITAIN IS A DANGER AND THE SOLUTION MIGHT BE IN MAINLAND PARTIES PLAYING A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE LEADER ALSO SEES THE AGREEMENT AS ONE MILESTONE IN THE GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND IRELAND, AND NOTES ELSEWHERE THAT "RESPECT FOR THE IRISH REPUBLIC HAS PROBABLY GROWN" IN BRITAIN SINCE 1969.

7. THE TIMES LEADER OF 11/8/89, HEADED "TROOPS IN", SUPPORTING

THE MAINTENANCE OF TROOPS IN N.I., SAYS THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST AVOID THE TEMPTATION TO CUT ITS LOSSES AND LEAVE AND ALSO AVOID THE TEMPTATION OF BELIEVING THAT ALL LONDON CAN DO IS MINIMALIST MANAGEMENT. A GOVERNMENT MUST SEEK WAYS TO RESTORE NORMAL LIFE AND MUCH HAS BEEN ACHIEVED IN THE PAST DECADE THAT MERITS SOBER CELEBRATION.

8. THE DAILY EXPRESS LEADER OF 11/8/89 MAKES THE POINT THAT "AS W

MARK THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF TROOPS IN ULSTER NO ONE CAN DOUBT THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO ENLARGE THE POLITICAL OPTIONS OF PEOPLE IN N.I. BY ALLOWING OFFICIAL CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES TO CONTEST ELECTIONS THERE.

9. THE EVENING STANDARD OF 10 AUGUST CARRIED AN INTERESTING EDITORIAL ENTITLED "NO SURRENDER TO IRA TERROR" WHICH IS A FAXING WHICH PRAISES THE ANGLO IRISH AGREEMENT AND THE COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM IT. IT REFERS TO THE "WHOLE CONCESSION" MADE BY DUBLIN IN "AGREEING NOT TO PURSUE ITS CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WHOLE OF IRELAND".

10. AMONG FEATURE ARTICLES, TO BE NOTED ARE:

(A) CRUISE O'BRIEN (TIMES 10/8/89) WHO STATES THAT IT IS IN

INTERESTS OF EVERYONE IN NORTHERN IRELAND THAT BRITAIN SHOULD NOT DISENGAGE AND CALLS FOR A POLICY OF GOVERNING N.I. AS FAIRLY AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT LOOKING FOR NON-EXISTENT "AGREED SOLUTIONS".

(B) CHRIS BUCKLAND (D. EXPRESS 10/8/89) MAKES THE POINT THAT A RETURN TO DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ALTER THE SITUATION AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT FACES A LONG HARD SLOG WHICH WILL NOT BE MADE EASIER BY APPEASERS WHO WANT TO PULL THE TROOPS OUT.

11. BBC AND ITV HAVE BOTH DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE AIRTIME TO THE ANNIVERSARY, PARTICULARLY DURING THE MORNING TELEVISION PROGRAMMES. FOOTAGE OF 20 YEARS AGO HAS BEEN WIDELY USED WITH A NUMBER OF FEATURES BRINGING THE STORY UP TO DATE. BBC IS CURRENTLY SCREENING A SERIES OF THREE PROGRAMMES ON THE IM

SORRY DUBLIN WILL START FROM NO. 11 AGAIN

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12. BBC TV CONTINUED ITS COVERAGE WITH A 90 MINUTE SPECIAL SHOWN LAST NIGHT AND ENTITLED 'FOREVER DIVIDED'. CHAIRED BY DAVID DIMBLEBY THE PROGRAMME FELL INTO TWO PARTS. THE FIRST WAS YET ANOTHER CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, HEAVILY WEIGHTED TOWARDS AUGUST 1969 AND THE ACTUAL DEPLOYMENT OF TROOPS, MADE UP OF OLD FILM AND NEW INTERVIEW WITH MANY OF THE PERSONALITIES CONCERNED. THE SECOND PART SAW DIMBLEBY PUT A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS AND SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE TO A PANEL OF POLITICIANS FROM IRELAND AND BRITAIN. I HAVE VIDEOTAPED THE PROGRAMME AND THIS IS AVAILABLE IF REQUIRED. THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, MR. O'MALLEY, WAS INTERVIEWED FOR THE FIRST PART IN WHICH HE GAVE AN OUTLINE OF THE VIEWS OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST 1969 AND, LATER, OF ATTEMPTS BY THE THEN TAOISEACH, JACK LYNCH, TO HAVE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THERE WAS AN IRISH DIMENSION AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN HAD A ROLE TO PLAY.

13. THE PANEL DISCUSSION FEATURED, INTER ALIA, DR. GARRET FITZGERALD, JOHN TAYLOR, PETER ROBINSON, JOHN HUME, GENERAL FARRAN HOCKLEY, JACK HERMON, MERLYN REES AND HUMPHREY ATKINS. THE CHIEF DEFICIENCY IN THE PROGRAMME WAS THE LARGE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS AND SCENARIOS WHICH DIMBLEBY WAS DETERMINED TO PUT. SOME OF THEM WERE, TO QUOTE PETER ROBINSON, OUT OF "CLOUD CUCKOO LAND" AND THE COMPERE'S DETERMINATION TO PUT ALL QUESTIONS PREVENTED ANY TEASING OUT OF ISSUES WHENEVER ANYTHING INTERESTING WAS SAID. LITTLE THAT WAS NEW EMERGED BEYOND VAGUE TALK OF POWERSHARING FROM JOHN TAYLOR, ON WHICH SPECIFICS WERE LACKING AND IN THE MAIN THE PROGRAMME SERVED ONLY TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE REPRESENTED TO REITERATE LONG HELD POSITIONS.

CORRECTION TO OUR NO. 7

LINE 3 NO. 7 SHOULD READ AVOID THE TEMPTATION TO CUT ITS LOSSES ETC

END
E-A DUBLIN
F-A1 LDN