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13/14
13. 11. 90

Discussion with John Hume

Hume-Adams Contacts

Tao Seach
You may wish to
look at this before
this afternoon
meeting
13/11

1. Hume, who asked to see me last week, said he had been approached a few days beforehand by Fr. Alex Reid, the Clonard Monastery priest who acts as an intermediary between Adams and Hume. Reid, who argued that Adams was genuinely interested in seeking a political alternative to violence, handed Hume a text (Annex A) which, he said, had been approved by Adams. The document, in summary, proposes the establishment of an "Irish Peace Convention" with the objective of agreeing a political and diplomatic strategy to persuade the British and the Unionists of the merits of a "new and independent Ireland".
2. According to Reid, Adams envisaged Hume and himself entering into a binding personal pact, with Hume agreeing to work for the establishment of a "Peace Convention" along the lines outlined in the document and Adams, for his part, committing himself to securing a cessation of violence. If agreement was reached and a Conference was called for a specific date, the IRA would be prepared to announce a cessation of violence in advance of this date. However, Reid added that he was unsure if the IRA would be prepared to trust Dublin and agree formally to such a cessation without hearing directly (though of course privately) from them.
3. Reid also made the point that the Adams' text was very much along the lines of the Fr. Reid and Fr. Raymond Murray document entitled "A Pastoral Response to the Present Conflict", which had been drawn up late last year (see Annex B); it will be recalled that the Reid/Murray initiative had been endorsed by the late Cardinal O Fiaich.

Related developments

4. Hume was also approached recently by a prominent Derry businessman, and SDLP supporter (Brendan Duddy), with what Duddy claimed was a document which had been agreed by the IRA Army Council. (Duddy was used by the IRA as an intermediary to Hume twice in the past, once when the ceasefire in the 1970s was mooted and, secondly, when he drove Hume part of the way to a secret meeting with the IRA. Any approach from him has therefore, in Hume's view, to be taken seriously).
5. Duddy did not leave a copy of his document with Hume. However, Hume's recollection is that - like the Adams' text - it envisaged a Conference being called by the Taoiseach in the knowledge that a date for a cessation of violence would be announced by the IRA in advance of the Conference. The document also foresaw a common nationalist strategy being worked out in the Conference and subsequently presented to European Community leaders. In this regard, the text was couched in language which emphasised Ireland's place and role in Europe, and the fact that Irish people had always been European in outlook. The thinking here seemed to be that the British could be pressurised into responding positively to nationalist objectives through an effective campaign waged in a European context.
6. Duddy went on to express great concern to Hume that, if the present feelers from the IRA were left unanswered, the violence in the North could continue for another twenty years - and would in this period plunge new depths of horror. There was, in his view, some hope of ending the campaign while Adams and people of his age group were in charge. He was deeply worried and frightened, however, by the attitude of the huge mass of young (i.e. under thirty-five) alienated, unemployed Catholics. If they took over at

some stage, then even more extreme action was possible - including, if they thought it helpful to their strategy, the shooting of nationalist politicians in the street. (Note: While Duddy's scenario may not be entirely unrealistic, it is possible that there was also an element of putting pressure on Hume).

Chaplains' Initiative

7. In addition to the above, it is important to recall that there is also an on-going effort by the Catholic and Church of Ireland Chaplains in the Maze to move the IRA away from their present campaign. This effort had the strong support of the late Cardinal; it was also raised by Dr. Cahal Daly when we met on the 26th July last (the relevant extract from the report of our conversation is at Annex C). On that occasion, Dr. Daly said that, while he recognised the "immense moral dilemma" of any contact with Sinn Fein and the IRA, it would be regrettable if the present feelers from that quarter - which he saw as a considerable movement forward from previous positions - were left unanswered.

Comment

8. Overall, the above three developments seem indicative of a willingness on the part of Adams and the Provisional leadership to move towards a political approach. While the language of the Adams' text is undoubtedly "provisional" in tone, it appears to mark a move away from the setting of rigid pre-conditions for a cessation of violence. In this regard, and while the Peace Convention would have specific and strongly nationalist policy objectives, these relate to the persuading of the British Government and the Unionists to agree to the creation of "a new and independent Ireland" rather than, as in the past, to a simple declaration by the

British of their intention to leave Ireland by a specific date.

9. At the same time, it is essential that the Provisional position and proposals - and in particular their status - be fully clarified before consideration could be given here to any possible response. The question has to be asked, for instance, whether Adams (assuming he is himself as fully committed to this initiative as Reid says he is) is capable of carrying the military wing of the Provisionals with him. The required clarification might best be done through those already involved, in particular Hume (but possibly also using the good offices of Dr. Daly).
10. There are inevitably clear dangers in any decision to go down this road. The "moral dilemma" mentioned by Dr. Daly is obviously a factor; additionally, if knowledge of the matter were to become public at any stage (and one could not exclude that the Provisionals might at some point leak it for their own benefit), allegations that the Government were dealing - even at some remove - with Sinn Fein and the IRA would undoubtedly be controversial, though the active endorsement of Hume (and possibly Dr. Daly) would clearly attenuate this. As to the substance, even if it were possible to get the proposed Convention underway on agreed terms, one must be sceptical that any recommendations emerging would be saleable to Unionists. In such circumstances, there is clearly a distinct risk that the IRA would return to its campaign of violence and, in the process, possibly claim the Convention recommendations as a moral underpinning for its campaign.
11. On the other hand, it can be argued that the possibility of achieving a cessation of violence is a sufficiently important objective to justify taking a degree of risk. There is little doubt but that the Provisionals seem to have

the capacity to continue almost indefinitely; in addition, any talks on the basis of the present Brooke approach, with its underlying and strong emphasis on devolution, is probably likely if anything to provoke the Provisionals into greater activity. (Of course, a real and open dialogue between Unionists and the Government would create a very different dynamic but this, given in particular the attitude of the present Unionist leadership, seems unlikely at present).

12. The British reaction to these approaches is extremely interesting. At an earlier stage, their main concern appeared to be that any outreach to Sinn Fein/IRA might cut across the Brooke initiative. Currently, however - perhaps reflecting reduced expectations for the Brooke initiative, or possibly indicative of a changed atmosphere due to Chilcot's influence - they appear to be showing tentative signs of interest. Last week's major speech by Peter Brooke was clearly directed primarily at Sinn Fein; this week Chilcot is meeting Bishop Daly and, subsequently, the Maze Chaplains (see report from Mr. McMahon being circulated separately). In these circumstances, if we were to decide to go some way in the direction being proposed by Sinn Fein, we should probably be open with the British about any such decision.
13. Overall, therefore, while the present signals from Sinn Fein would need to be treated with extreme caution, it would seem inadvisable to dismiss them out of hand. An early meeting at political level with Hume would seem desirable; the objective at this stage, while exposing the Government to the minimum possible risk, would be to help clarify the status of the Adams approach and allow the potential for taking the process further to be assessed adequately.

DRC
Dermot Gallagher,
13 November, 1990.

The Irish Government would agree to organise a formally constituted Irish Peace Convention, which would formulate and advise on the implementation of a political and diplomatic strategy for justice and peace in accordance with the following policy objectives.

1. To persuade the British Government, in the best interests of the people of Ireland and the people of Britain, and in accordance with the principle of national self-determination, to adopt a policy to allow for the creation of a new and independent Ireland.
2. To persuade the British Government that the 1920 arrangements have failed and, with the Irish Government, to call a Constitutional Peace Conference representative of all the people of Ireland which, in accordance with the principles of national self-determination, would decide the constitutional, political, social and economic future of the people of Ireland.
3. To persuade the British Government, that, in accordance with the policy for the creation of a new, independent Ireland, they should plan for a democratic and peaceful disengagement from Ireland over a determinate period of time.
4. To persuade the people of the Unionist tradition that their participation in and consent to the creation of a new and independent Ireland would best serve their own fundamental interests, the fundamental interests of the people of the Nationalist tradition and of the people of Britain and the general interests of justice and peace in Ireland.

5. To seek the active support and encouragement of the British Government for 4 above.
- 6.1 The policy objectives set out above, would form the basis of an overall political and diplomatic strategy for justice and peace. In combination with the Convention, the Irish Government, without prejudice to the continuing exercise of its normal responsibilities, would actively promote through its executive organs and representatives any agreed strategy and seek effective support for it from the Irish abroad and from the wider international community.
- 6.2 This Irish Peace Convention would be:-
 - a. Truly and democratically representative of all the people of Ireland as a whole.
 - b. Without prejudice to the rights and functions of Dail Eireann and the Oireachtas under the Constitution.
 - c. Formally constituted by agreement between the parties with a foundation-charter based on the Proclamation of 1916 which would define and set out its policy objectives, the methods for implementing them and the procedures which would govern debate and decision making within the Convention.
7. In keeping with the social and economic principles of the 1916 Proclamation, it would also be the function of the Convention to consult on the formation and implementation of policies, relating to the island as a whole, which would promote the social and economic freedom of the Irish people and so provide a secure future and increased prosperity for everyone.

B,

PROPOSAL

FOR

A DEMOCRATIC OVER-ALL POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY

FOR

JUSTICE, PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO THE PRESENT CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION

The Conflict in Northern Ireland

The daily, tragic consequences of the conflict in Northern Ireland - bloodshed, imprisonment, widespread suffering and general despair of any just and democratic solution - are a constant source of anguish to the Christian heart and demand a compassionate and effective response from it.

It is the responsibility, therefore, of every Christian but particularly of Christian leaders to do everything possible to end this inhuman situation by seeking to channel the course of events away from the road of armed and violent confrontation which is strewn with death and destruction and on to the road of political communication and dialogue which is marked out by the principles of justice and charity and characterised by the democratic use of political and diplomatic persuasion.

We must begin by lifting our eyes to a vision of the peace we want to create and that, in general, can only be a new political situation where the people of Ireland in their nationalist and unionist traditions are living together in friendship and mutual co-operation for the common good of all and where the people of Ireland and the people of Britain are living together in the same way.

How to make this vision a reality is, therefore, the great question on which all our peace-making energies and abilities must focus. For those who believe in the Christian message of justice and love, there can be only one way to do this and that is the way which begins from the fact that people are people, God's sons and daughters, before they are Irish, British, Nationalist, Unionist or Republican. This means that the principles of peace are essentially the principles which respect and correspond to the human dignity and the human rights of all the people who are involved in the present conflict.

This, in turn, means that the principles by which it must be resolved are the principles of political and democratic justice as they are understood and practised throughout the world and as they pertain to the particular nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Rooted in the God-given dignity of the human person, these principles define "the narrow road" which leads to political salvation. Any road defined by policies which lack the respect that is due to the dignity and the rights of people must, therefore, be seen as "the broad road" which leads to political destruction. Here, those who believe in the Lord Jesus, must be prepared, like His first followers, to leave "all things", all their partizan and sectarian political attitudes, and follow Him down the road of democratic justice and charity to whatever political destination it may lead.

The Response of the Church

Since some of the issues at stake in the present conflict pertain to the dignity of the human person and to his or her rights as a child of God and as a citizen in society, they also, by that very fact and for that very reason, pertain to the saving mission of the Church. This means that, in fulfilment of this mission, the Church must, through her representatives and ministers, intervene directly in this conflict to preach the Word of God as it applies to it and to witness to those eternal Gospel values which define, uphold and protect the dignity and the rights of the person.

It is also her mission, in face of this conflict, to preach the message of hope and courage by pointing continually to the Lord Himself as the Saviour who is always "in the midst" with the power that can resolve every conflict and the compassion that encompasses every participant, including those who inflict injustice as well as those who are afflicted by it.

The Church, then, has a pastoral duty to respond to a political situation when (but only when) moral and humanitarian issues are at stake. Political matters, as such, which belong to the sphere of democratic opinion and choice are not her business and she has no role, from her mission, to play in them except to insist that, in all matters, the first role must be given to God-like compassion for people because it is the supreme value in human affairs and the first principle of all human relationships including those of politics.

Translated into practice, this means that the only Christian and human way to conduct political affairs and to resolve the conflicts that arise from them is the way of communication and dialogue, practised by every participant, with the respect and the compassion that are due in justice and charity to every other participant.

As a process of listening and responding to what is humanly true and just in the position of every participant, political dialogue in this sense takes as its base the common humanity of all the participants and makes it the common ground where all can meet in harmony of principle to seek and to find the common good of all and, when necessary, to resolve political conflicts justly and democratically.

Given that this kind of dialogue is the Christian and the human way to conduct political affairs and to resolve political conflicts, the Church has a pastoral responsibility to use her resources, her influence and her lines of communication to encourage, promote and, when necessary, even to facilitate it.

The Church and the Dialogue of Peace

It follows, then, that when a conflict like the one in Northern Ireland has become violent and is causing suffering and bloodshed, the Church has a missionary and pastoral duty to intervene directly and to do all she can to bring its violent dimensions and their tragic consequences to an end. Here her role may be to facilitate the necessary dialogue between the relevant parties especially when all lines of communication between them have broken down and the tragic dimensions of the conflict cannot and will not be ended unless and until they are restored. She must then use her political neutrality, her moral credibility and her own lines of communication to provide the kind of sanctuary setting where the parties to the conflict, who sincerely wish to use political and democratic methods to achieve justice and peace, can meet together for the necessary dialogue without damaging their own political or moral credibility and without compromising or appearing to compromise any of their own political or democratic principles.

These guide-lines for the pastoral role of the Church in a situation of political conflict are given here because they explain the background and introduce the purpose of the pastoral intervention represented by the proposal for "a democratic over-all political and diplomatic strategy for justice, peace and reconciliation" which follows.

A Pastoral Offer

A careful consideration of present opportunities for ending this conflict suggests that an agreement in principle on a political and diplomatic strategy for justice, peace and reconciliation between the Irish Government and the two main parties on the nationalist side in Northern Ireland, namely, the SDLP and Sinn Fein, could lead to a real break-through in the search for a just and democratic settlement. It is clear, however, to those who believe this that, on the one hand, such an agreement could not be made without the kind of political dialogue already described and, on the other, that, under present circumstances, such dialogue would not take place between the relevant parties unless special arrangements were made to facilitate it.

Given this view of the present prospects for peace, the pastors concerned believe they have a missionary and moral duty to intervene directly by suggesting to the parties concerned that a common strategy would help the cause of peace and by offering to facilitate the dialogue that would be necessary to organise it.

A Pastoral Request

Their only interest in all this is to save life and to protect people from suffering. They are intervening, therefore, on behalf of all those people who, because of the continuing conflict, will be killed, maimed or imprisoned and all those families who will be shattered as a result over the coming weeks and months.

They could not, however, fulfil this saving mission without the co-operation of all the parties concerned and so they have decided to ask each party for its co-operation. By making this request, they are, in fact, asking the parties to facilitate the Church by helping her to carry out her pastoral responsibilities in the present conflict. More, indeed, than that, they are, through this request, inviting each party to take an active part and to play its own role in the Church's own mission for justice, peace and reconciliation.

A Democratic Overall Political and Diplomatic Strategy for Justice and Peace

The following proposal for a democratic overall political and diplomatic strategy for justice, peace and reconciliation is based on the dialogue about such a strategy which has already taken place, particularly between the SDLP and Sinn Féin. It is not an original proposal, therefore, but one which reflects that dialogue and the agreements which, in general at least, emerged from it.

THE PROPOSAL

At the request of the elected representatives of the Nationalist community, the Irish Government would agree to organise a formally constituted Irish Peace Convention. The Convention would consult on the formulation and implementation of a political and diplomatic strategy to achieve justice, peace and reconciliation in accordance with the following policy objectives:-

1. To persuade the British Government, in the best interests of the people of Ireland and the people of Britain and in accordance with the principles of national self-determination and democratic consent, to adopt a policy to encourage or allow for the creation of a new and independent Ireland, based on agreement between the people of the Nationalist and Unionist traditions and on friendship and co-operation between the people of Ireland and the people of Britain.
2. To persuade the British Government that the 1920 arrangements have failed and to facilitate the coming together of the people of Ireland of both traditions to determine their own future by calling, as and when appropriate and jointly with the Irish Government, a Constitutional Peace Conference representative of all the people of Ireland to enable them to decide their own future in agreement and peace; and, then to support by legislation any agreement reached between them.
3. To persuade the people of the Unionist tradition that their consent to and their participation in the creation of a new and independent Ireland, in which their rights would be fully guaranteed, would best serve their own fundamental, long-term interests and the interests of the people of Britain, and would provide the best basis for lasting peace.
4. To seek the active support and encouragement of the British Government for No. 3 above so that they would use their influence and resources to persuade the people of the Unionist tradition that they would best serve their own fundamental and long-term interests by coming together with the people of the Nationalist tradition to build a new Ireland in which traditional diversity would be accommodated and where there would be a new relationship with Britain.
5. To persuade the British Government that, in accordance with the policy (as outlined in No.1 above) for the creation of a new and independent Ireland based on the principle of national self-determination and the principle of democratic consent, they should plan for a democratic and peaceful withdrawal from Ireland over a determinate period of time.

6. In keeping with the social and economic principles of the 1916 Proclamation, it would also be the function of the Convention to consult on the formation and implementation of policies, relating to the island as a whole, which would promote the social and economic progress of the Irish people and so provide a secure future and increased prosperity for everyone.
7. The policy objectives set out above would form the basis of an over-all political and diplomatic strategy for justice, peace and reconciliation. In combination with the Convention, the Irish Government, without prejudice to the continuing exercise of its normal responsibilities, would actively promote, through its executive organs and representatives, any agreed strategy and seek effective support for it from the Irish abroad and from the wider international community.
8. This Irish Peace Convention would be:-
 - a. Open to the democratic representatives of all the people of Ireland.
 - b. Without prejudice to the duties and functions of Dail Eireann, the Oireachtas and the Government under the Constitution, and to Ireland's existing international obligations.
 - c. Formally constituted by agreement between the parties to it with a foundation-charter based on the democratic principles of the 1916 Proclamation and in keeping with the true Republican vision of an Ireland embracing all Irish men and women, irrespective of their history, traditions and beliefs. This foundation-charter would define and set out its policy objectives, the methods for implementing them and the procedures which would govern debate and decision-making within the Convention.

This strategy is proposed as a credible and realistic way forward to a new, just and independent Ireland on the grounds that it would have the support of the vast majority of the people of the nationalist community and be powered by all the political and diplomatic forces at the disposal of the Irish Government. As a strategy for justice and peace, supported and powered in this way, it could, in operation, mobilise for the achievement of common objects, the greatest resource that Ireland possesses, namely, the talent and energy, the ingenuity and vision of the Irish people themselves.

By its very nature, therefore, the kind of strategy proposed above would have an inherent capacity for achieving the traditional aims of nationalism and republicanism in Ireland which would be far greater and far more efficacious than any now available. For this reason, it is proposed, in particular, to those who still believe that they must take up arms to resist political injustice in Ireland and to forward the traditional and just cause of Irish republicanism.

It is also proposed to them because it is clear that, not only the operation but even the very existence of a common, nationalist strategy for justice and peace will depend on whether or not it has been accepted in common and is being supported in common by every significant section of the nationalist community and this, given their powerful and unyielding commitment to Republican ideals, must include the people of the Republican Movement. In other words, not only the operation but the very existence of the proposed strategy depends on whether or not it is accepted as 'an alternative to arms'.

It must also be said that the continuing use of arms in the pursuit of nationalist aims is, as every day makes clear, also continuing to divide the nationalist people fundamentally among themselves and, therefore, against themselves and the achievement of these aims. This means that, without the co-operation of the people of the Republican Movement, the people of the nationalist community, as a whole, will not have the kind of political unity and cohesion among themselves which alone can give them the political strength and sense of purpose they will always need if they are to pursue the cause of Irish dignity and independence efficaciously and with the courage that can never be daunted. Nil neart gan cur le cheile.

Given, then, that the kind of strategy for justice and peace proposed above would become available to the national and republican people of Ireland should the people of the Republican Movement decide to end their military campaign, a new and compelling moral reason for doing so comes into sharp focus and must be faced and acknowledged with the kind of courage, honesty and compassion which history shows are native to the spirit of real and living Republicanism. The trust, therefore, must be that, under the inspiration of this spirit, the people of the Republican Movement will give a positive and co-operative response to this proposal.

7. Other issues mentioned by the Bishop included the efforts of the Catholic and Church of Ireland Chaplains in the Maze to move the paramilitaries away from violence. This initiative started with talks between the IRA and the UVF in the Maze but has since moved on (as reported by Mr. McMahon) to meetings between the Chaplains and, initially, Sinn Féin and, more recently, a group which included both Sinn Féin personnel and members of the IRA Army Council.
8. At the last such meeting, the Army Council personnel said that they would be prepared to consider a cease-fire in return for a guarantee of "meaningful talks" with the British, either at political or civil service level. Bishop Daly saw this as a considerable movement forward from previous positions which demanded "declarations of intent", etc. In putting forward their proposal, the IRA leaders said it reflected no weakness in equipment or personnel - in fact the direct opposite was the case - but was an effort on their part to contribute to the peace process.
9. In the light of this development, it was decided that the Cardinal and Archbishop Eames should approach the Secretary of State and convey the proposal directly to him. This was done a few days before the Cardinal left for Lourdes. As a result of the Cardinal's death, the only report on what occurred at this meeting came from Archbishop Eames and he was "not to be trusted in any way". According to Eames, Brooke said he would reflect on the development but gave the impression that any encouragement or response on his part might be unhelpful to the present talks initiative. Eames said the British also wondered if the names of the Army Council personnel might be conveyed to them in order to help authenticate the proposal; Daly thought this an appalling reflection on the credibility of the Chaplains as well as having possible safety implications for both the Chaplains and their contacts.
10. Bishop Daly went on to say that, while he recognised the "immense moral dilemma" of any contact with Sinn Féin and the IRA, it would be regrettable if the present feelers from this quarter were left unanswered. He did not know, however, how to take the issue further at this stage.