



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2020/17/16
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

SECRET

Meetings with Hume and Mallon,
15th and 16th June, 1990

1. I met John Hume and Séamus Mallon (separately) in the North over the weekend.

SDLP Meeting with Secretary of State, 15th June

2. The crunch issue at the meeting between the SDLP (Hume and Mallon) and the Secretary of State in London was, as anticipated, the timing of North-South talks. Brooke (who was accompanied by Mawhinney, Blelloch, Burns and McConnell) argued that, while all sides had to know the general framework for the talks, he believed that the drawing up of a timetable for them would be "very restricting". In response to a Hume question, Brooke accepted that there was as yet no agreement between Dublin and London on either the framework or the timetable for talks.
3. Brooke went on to ask Hume for the SDLP position on the timetable issue. In response, both Hume and Mallon argued strongly that a precise timetable should be established before talks got underway. They both affirmed, in response to a direct question, that the SDLP did not want to get into talks until the framework and timetable had been laid down. Brooke then asked if it was an SDLP "pre-condition" to have the natural gap "parcelled out in terms of a timetable", while Mawhinney - making his only intervention - argued that a strict timetable could only inhibit and hinder progress.

Draft Statement by Secretary of State

4. The Secretary of State then handed over to the SDLP a copy of the draft statement (Annex 1) he would hope to make in

the Commons in early July on the framework of the talks and asked for the party's views on it. This is the same text which Brooke gave to the Minister at their meeting in London on the 11th June and which we found quite unacceptable. In reply to Hume's question about our attitude to the text, Burns said that we had "reservations" about it.

5. The meeting concluded with Brooke asking Hume to let him have a considered view of the terms of the draft statement as soon as possible. Hume agreed to come back to him "within a few days".
6. When we met on Saturday, Hume asked for our views on whether his response should be orally or in writing, and the terms in which he might reply (there will be a separate note/recommendation on this).

Liaison Group

7. The meeting also discussed the format of the Liaison Group. Burns initially gave the SDLP to understand that the two Governments had now agreed that the Group would be private and intergovernmental but, under pressure from Mallon, the British side accepted that no agreement had as yet been reached between us. Brooke, however, made the point that he would be astonished if, all else being agreed, there was to be a problem at the end of the day about the Liaison Group.

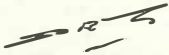
Co-ordination with Dublin

8. During our discussion, Mallon made the point forcefully that there needed to be the closest co-ordination between Dublin and the SDLP as the talks progressed. It would be in the British interest to try and divide us or at least to prevent us taking up united positions on issues. In his view, it

was crucial that there be a very early discussion between Dublin and the SDLP - on the basis of papers - on the agenda and content of talks.

Socialist Group Statement

9. Hume also referred to the resolution on possible political progress in Ireland passed by the Socialist Group at their recent meeting in Dublin (Annex 2) and - very tentatively - suggested that the Taoiseach might wish to give consideration - if he thought it appropriate - to a statement along analogous lines from the Dublin Summit which would welcome the efforts by the two Governments and the political parties in the North to try and advance political progress.


Dermot Gallagher,
18 June, 1990.

cc: PST; PSM; Mr. Nally; PSS; Ambassador London;
Mr. Mathews; Mr. Brosnan; Joint Secretary; Ms. Anderson.

TEXT FOR INCLUSION IN A STATEMENT BY MR BROOKE

"It is because the Northern Ireland parties all look, as I do, to address each of the three relationships that the talks I have described will necessarily involve discussions between the Northern Ireland parties, discussions involving the Northern Ireland parties and the Government of the Republic of Ireland: and discussions between the two Governments. These discussions may not necessarily start at the same time. But if real progress is to be made, it will be necessary to get all three sets of discussions under way at an early date and if an agreement satisfactory to all is to be reached on the three relationships, then discussions will need to proceed in parallel, and to conclude simultaneously".

"The British Government will maintain contact with the Irish Government from the outset of the process on all matters of concern to them. The participants in the talks on future political arrangements in Northern Ireland will be the British Government and the Northern Ireland political parties. Talks on future relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic, in which the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland political parties will participate, will begin as soon as sufficient progress has been made in the internal talks to make this worthwhile. It would not be right to try to force these talks into some straitjacket of timing. It is important to recognise that they are an organic process. But, taking account of that, and given the parties' constructive approach, I am confident that this point will be reached quickly. And the two Governments will be in constant touch about any implications for the Agreement proposed arrangements may have or about suggestions for an alternative to the Agreement".