



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2020/17/56
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.

Revised

11.07.1990
152
20/7/90

Hume meeting with Paisley and Molyneaux,
House of Commons, 10.00 pm, 18th July, 1990.

1. At Hume's request, he met Paisley and Molyneaux privately in the House of Commons last night. Hume had earlier drafted a text which he felt might be acceptable to all parties and could be used by the Secretary of State in announcing agreement on talks. He handed a copy of the text to the Unionist leaders.
2. Paisley and Molyneaux said they welcomed the opportunity to get together with Hume and to discuss the present initiative directly. They went through the Hume paper and particularly welcomed paragraph 5 which sets out the positions of the Unionist parties and the SDLP. They felt indeed that this paragraph might best serve as an opening paragraph for the Brooke statement, with everything else flowing from it.
3. The Unionist leaders also expressed unhappiness at having to deal piecemeal with pieces of paper over the last two weeks. They added that they were greatly surprised that the NIO only appear to have given us the (envisaged) 5th July statement on the previous day, as they had expected that we would have received a draft weeks ago.

Two issues of particular concern

4. The Unionist leaders said there were two issues of particular concern to them - (a) the description of their participation in North-South talks and (b) the need for "substantial progress" to appear to have been made in the internal talks before they could move to the North-South strand.
5. To Hume's surprise, Molyneaux and Paisley said it was the British who had suggested to them that they talk to Dublin as part of a "UK team". They had made the point in response that the SDLP could not be part of such a team, to which the

British had replied that the latter party could come in their own right. Paisley went on to say that there was no way he could talk to the South about Irish unity; Hume responded that the agenda would be about relationships between North and South and presumably Paisley had particular points which he would wish to make in that regard. It was up to him to raise whatever issues he wished but he could not expect to pre-empt others raising matters of interest and concern to them.

6. On the "substantial progress" issue, the Unionists said that they needed to have an idea of where they were going in the internal talks before coming to talks with Dublin. They would consider, however, whether paragraph 5 of the Hume text would give them sufficient cover on this.

Deadlines

7. Molyneaux and Paisley made the point strongly that they were very opposed to artificial deadlines being set for the process. Molyneaux said he had told Brooke that he was opposed to the 5th July deadline, and he was equally opposed to a new deadline being set next week. His own view was that it would be better if Brooke wrote to the party leaders rather than making a Parliamentary statement, which would be open to "dissection" on the floor of the House. They could then say that they had received the text, welcome the fact that talks would be getting under way and, in this regard, make the point that they had nothing to add to their party positions.
8. Molyneaux also added that, even if Brooke sent such a letter, it might be that he would still wish to make a statement; in such circumstances, however, it could be quite short. (Comment: we would also presumably make a statement at that time).

Devolution

9. Molyneaux, who had met Hume separately at an earlier stage of the evening, said that he was concerned that devolution was being "pushed at them" and that there were strong leaks in the press from the NIO that this was the objective of the talks. He also believed that NIO officials were meeting secretly with Peter Robinson and Sammy Wilson and urging them to put pressure on Paisley to move strongly in support of devolution.

English Bureaucrats

10. Both Molyneaux and Paisley were critical of what they called "English bureaucrats", who did not understand any of the parties in the North. Paisley added that "if they were sitting in this room, they would know that we understood each other better than they do".

Next Step

11. The Unionists promised to return to Hume with their response in a day or two. They also asked that a copy of the text be given to the NIO and this has now been done.

Dermot Gallagher,
19 July, 1990

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

Text given by John Hume to leaders of Unionist Parties
on 18th July, 1990

1. The discussions that have taken place over the last six months have led both Governments, and equally important, have I believe led the Northern Ireland parties to believe that there may be a basis on which political talks may be held. It is accepted by all that the talks will need to embrace the main three relationships that need to be resolved if we are to attain our objective of lasting peace and stability. It follows from that that there would be three different sets of talks to deal with each of the three relationships - within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between Britain and the Irish Republic, including any implications for the Anglo-Irish Agreement. It is also clear that no agreement on any one aspect could be reached until all parties were satisfied with the totality of what might emerge from the dialogue. For that reason we may need some arrangements for liaison between the different strands of these complex discussions.
2. I look forward to my own involvement in the three strands of discussion. The three Northern Ireland political parties will be participants in the first and second strands. The Irish Government will of course be centrally involved in the second and third strands.
3. It is of course accepted and agreed between all participants that once the talks get underway they will be intensive and all parties have assured me that it is their intention to participate actively from the outset in order to make substantial and speedy progress.
4. I would like publicly to acknowledge the fact that the progress we have made to date would not have been possible without the goodwill and seriousness shown by the Northern Ireland parties.
5. The Northern Ireland parties have been quite straight

forward and clear in their attitudes to the proposed talks and to their objectives. The leaders of the two Unionist parties have made it abundantly clear that their objective in the talks has been to seek an alternative to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. They have made it clear that their approach to all the talks will be governed by their stated public positions and that they would wish any agreement reached to be endorsed by the people of Northern Ireland. The SDLP for their part have made clear their commitment to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and their belief that if an alternative Agreement which could transcend it is to be considered, in an effort to resolve this serious problem once and for all, then all the relationships which affect the problem should be discussed and agreed and all parties should be free to put any matter on the table for discussion. If agreement is reached the SDLP would like it to be endorsed by the people of the North and the people of the South.

6. Notwithstanding these different approaches it has been possible, following intensive discussion in recent days, to reach agreement to proceed to the three sets of talks. While these talks, for obvious reasons, cannot start at the same time, it is agreed by all participants that, so as to reach a conclusion that will address all three of the underlying relationships within the agreed timeframe, it will be necessary to launch all sets of discussions within weeks of each other.
7. I would like to set out where I think we go as a result of the progress made so far and to give some idea of the specific tasks which I intend to carry forward over the coming weeks.
8. The immediate next steps will be to maintain contact with all parties to the talks over the summer to finalise

understandings of the agenda, administrative arrangements and composition of delegations. At all times these administrative arrangements will be made in agreement with all parties.

9. The Government will also, in agreement with the Irish Government, settle and announce the dates of the Conference for the rest of the year. This will assist the orderly planning and conduct of Conference business. An interval of some months between two specific Conference meetings would facilitate the political dialogue and negotiations which we now anticipate.
10. As the Conference will not be meeting between the specified dates, the Secretariat at Maryfield will accordingly not be required for that period to discharge its normal role of servicing Conference meetings provided for in Article 3 of the Agreement.
11. At that point I would expect to chair a round of formal bilateral meeting with the main constitutional parties in Northern Ireland, in order to ensure that all were satisfied with the agenda and other arrangements. If so, I would then convene a plenary meeting of those parties, on the understanding that inter-party talks could get under way.
12. Throughout this process I have expressed myself in cautious terms. It is wrong to raise false expectations when the issues, as is so well known, are difficult. But I have been greatly impressed by the spirit which I have encountered among those to whom I have talked. If agreement on the triple strands could be achieved we would stand at the threshold of a new Agreement, and a new beginning for relationships between both parts of Ireland, and between the peoples of these islands.