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TAOISEACH

(28)

Taoiseach

You may wish to have

this for your meeting this afternoon

24/1/91

Discussion with John Hume.

18th January, 1991

1. Hume briefed me last Friday on the SDLP's meeting the previous day with the Secretary of State. Hume was accompanied at the meeting, which lasted one and a half hours, by Mallon, McGrady and Hendron, while the Secretary of State's team consisted of Mawhinney, Chilcot, Pilling and other officials.

Carraher Shooting

2. The first half of the meeting was taken up with a discussion of the recent Carraher shooting in Cullyhanna. Mallon, according to Hume, was extremely emotional in his interventions and went as far as to accuse the NIO of issuing a "tissue of lies" in their first response to the shooting; he, however, withdrew this specific allegation at a later stage of the meeting. (Note: Mallon is very depressed at the moment and believes that, as a result of the behaviour of the British army in South Armagh, he may be in serious danger of losing up to 4,000 votes to Sinn Fein at the next election and very possibly his seat).

Latest British Paper

3. The British gave the SDLP a copy of their latest paper (Annex A). In presenting it, Brooke (who spoke from a prepared text) said that it was not an agreed paper with the Unionists but was what he called "a non-final draft". In support of the new text, he argued in particular that he had now succeeded in moving the Unionists away from "explicit conditionality".

4. Hume, in responding to the paper, said he welcomed the apparent progress which had been made in the drafting exercise. There were elements in the paper which were very positive - the references to the "stated positions" of parties, the relationship between the three strands, and the outcome of the talks being "accepted by the people".
5. Hume went on to say, however, that there were aspects of the paper which were of concern to the SDLP. He said he referred in particular to what he saw as a "down-grading of the Dublin Government's role" and as Dublin being brought into the process "by the back door". If the process was about a new Agreement, it should be the two Governments who were in charge of it.
6. Hume also expressed specific concern about the language of the final sentence of paragraph 9 - ["The other strands, both of which will of course involve the Irish Government, will be launched which I judge, in consultation with the parties, that the time is right in the light of progress already made"] - and queried whether this gave the Unionists a veto over the move to North-South talks. He quoted from recent interviews by Paisley in support of this view. Hume also objected to the reference (in para. 2) to replacing the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The British, in reply, argued that the Taoiseach had used this term (to my knowledge, we have never formally used this term but instead have spoken of a "transcending" or "better" Agreement).
7. Hume also invited his colleagues to comment on the paper but, apart from a brief, forceful and blunt intervention by Mallon, they left the presentation to him. Mallon, who has been deeply sceptical about the Brooke initiative from the beginning, characterised the latest text as nothing more

than the 5th July paper "in a new suit, with shining shoes and a bow tie!

8. The meeting concluded on the basis that the SDLP were aware that the Government here were at present analysing the new paper and that the party would wish to be aware of Dublin's thinking before giving a definitive response.

Dermot Gallagher,
22 January, 1991.

cc: PSM; Mr. Nally; PSS; Ambassador London; Mr. Mathews;
Mr. Brosnan; Joint Secretary; Counsellors A-I; Box

Annex A.

DRAFT STATEMENT

1. Mr Speaker, I am pleased to be able to inform the House that, following extensive discussions with the constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland and with the Irish Government, a basis for formal political talks now exists. I frankly acknowledge to the House that this would not have been possible without the goodwill and determination of the Northern Ireland parties and the helpful and constructive approach taken by the Irish Government. The stated positions of all these parties is well known.

2. In the light of my discussion with Mr Collins, the Irish Foreign Minister, on [] January I can confirm that Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Republic of Ireland would be prepared to consider a new and more broadly based agreement or structure to replace the Anglo-Irish Agreement if such an arrangement can be arrived at through direct discussion and negotiation between all of the parties concerned. This is in accordance with the position of both governments that Northern Ireland's present status as a part of the United Kingdom will not change without the consent of a majority of the people who live there. I refer the House to the relevant passage of my speech on 5 July.

3. To allow an opportunity for such a wider political dialogue the two Governments have decided not to hold a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference in the period between [x and y]. All of the parties concerned will make use of this interval for comprehensive discussions to seek the new and more broadly-based agreement which I have just described.

4. 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.

5. The parties involved in this process will be the two Governments and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party and the Ulster Unionist Party.

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6. It is accepted that discussions must focus on three main relationships: between both sides of the community in Northern Ireland, including the relationship between any new institutions there and the Westminster Parliament; between both parts of Ireland; and between the two Governments. It is common ground between all the parties that hope of achieving a new and more broadly based agreement rests on finding a way to give adequate expression to the totality of the relationships I have mentioned.

7. Talks will accordingly take place in three strands corresponding respectively to these relationships. In discussions on the relationship between both parts of Ireland, the Unionist parties will be part of the United Kingdom team.

8. It is accepted by all those involved that, if full use is to be made of the interval between meetings of the Conference to achieve an overall agreement satisfactory to all, it will be necessary to have launched all three sets of discussions by approximately halfway through the interval.

9. A first step towards getting related discussions under way in all three strands will be the opening, as soon as possible, of substantive talks between the parties in Northern Ireland under my chairmanship. These will commence with a round of bilateral meetings between the individual parties and myself before moving, when I believe an appropriate point has been reached, to plenary sessions. The other strands, both of which will of course involve the Irish Government, will be launched when I judge, in consultation with the parties, that the time is right in the light of progress already made.

10. The internal talks, like the talks in the other strands, will follow a demanding and intensive schedule. All concerned have assured me they will participate in good faith and will make every effort to achieve progress.

11. It is accepted by all the parties that nothing will be finally agreed in any strand until everything is agreed in the talks as a whole and that confidentiality will be maintained thereunto. However, in the final analysis the outcome must be accepted by the people.