



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Misc.
F. 2.

Uimhir.....

To:

From:

Northern Ireland

28

Taoiseach

Anne Anderson phoned just now (11.05 a.m.) to say that Molyneux has formally accepted Sir Ninian Stephen as Chairman but that Paisley has said that his researches will not be completed until 12 noon and that he cannot give a reply until then.

The four party leaders are at a meeting in which, presumably, Hume will say that the start of Strand 1 can wait until 12 noon, when Paisley's reply is received. However, this is only a presumption: Hume has not been in touch with the Department.

The assumption is that Paisley is engaged in some form of theological hair-splitting, perhaps trying to put himself in the position to say that Strand 1 talks have begun, without full agreement on the Chairman for Strand 2.

On the assumption that all goes well, the attached statement, which you might like to look over, in advance, could issue.

DM
Dermot Nally

17 June 1991

agreed
[Signature]

M. Mara

Paisley has now agreed "with some personal reservations".

Will you please issue statement asap.

DM
17/6.

Note
Referred to
as by
D. Nally by
Mr. Mara.
DM
17.6.91.

Government Statement on Round-table Talks
17 June, 1991

The Government are glad to announce, jointly with the British Government, that Sir Ninian Stephen will be the Chairman of Strand Two of the round-table talks. They wish to express their sincere appreciation to Sir Ninian for his willingness to accept this responsibility.

The Government share the warm and widespread welcome for the start today of plenary meetings in Strand One. They expect that the talks process will now get vigorously and fully under way; for their part, the Government will continue to do everything possible to facilitate and advance this historic process.

Above is as issued

Jemy

Ministerial Meeting
London, 14 June, 1991

McMurtry
17/6
18.6.91
(28)

1. The Irish side was represented by Ministers Collins and Burke, accompanied by Messrs. Dorr, Gallagher, O' Donovan, Ms. Anderson and Mr. Donoghue. The British side was represented by Mr. Brooke and Dr. Mawhinney, accompanied by Messrs. Pilling, Thomas, Cook (NIO), Mr. Archer (FCO), Mr. Alston (Joint Secretary) and Ambassador Fenn. The discussion was conducted very largely in private session involving Ministers only; the following is therefore a summary of developments rather than a detailed account of exchanges.

Rejection of Canadian Nominee

2. At the British suggestion, officials met separately while Ministers held their initial tete-a-tete discussion. The British side was anxious to inform us as soon as possible that Roy McMurtry (the former Canadian High Commissioner to London, on whom both Governments were agreed for Chairman of Strand Two, and who the previous night had conveyed his willingness to do the job), had been rejected by Paisley.
3. Pilling said that McMurtry had told their Ambassador in Ottawa that, while Attorney General of Ontario in 1976, he had made a speech criticising Paisley and expressing the view that Paisley was not a suitable person to come to Canada. In the circumstances, the Secretary of State had felt it prudent to try to establish on a personal and informal basis what Paisley's reaction might be to McMurtry. Paisley's response had been immediate and emphatic - there was no way he would sit under McMurtry's chairmanship.

4. Paisley alleged that the comments made by McMurtry in 1976 were an attack not only on him personally but also on his Church; at the time, Paisley had protested strongly to the Canadian High Commissioner in London (who had apparently indicated some sympathy with Paisley's complaint). The British side inferred that, at an earlier stage, Molyneux might have suggested including McMurtry's name on the Unionist list of nominees but Paisley had flatly turned him down; he was clearly not going to back-track at this stage.
5. The British side stressed their anxiety that Paisley's reaction to McMurtry would not become a matter of public knowledge. The Secretary of State takes the view that he did not put the name formally and "Paisley might also be allowed take refuge in that thought". Dorr commented that the British side was de facto giving the phrase consultation a very strong meaning. Pilling reiterated the distinction they saw between the position of the Governments and the parties - the two Governments must be whole-heartedly committed to a particular individual; the parties need not share this level of commitment but must give their acquiescence.
6. The Irish side suggested that in the light of the reaction to McMurtry, there might be merit in reverting to a neutral Finn: Max Jakobson. The British side said that their Ambassador to Finland had reported on Jakobson as "currently something of a guru, not a practitioner for many years, a bit garrulous". There was also a question mark over his health (he was clearly unwell at a recent lunch with the British Ambassador; however he had subsequently been through a successful operation). The Irish side - recalling Mr. Jakobson's dignity and reserve at the UN, his skills as Chairman which presumably had not been lost, and the quality of his recent writings - expressed considerable surprise at the British Ambassador's evaluation.

Adjournment

7. A brief adjournment followed during which both sides conferred separately. Ministers Collins and Burke indicated that the discussion in the tete-a-tete had followed the same lines as the conversation among officials. In the circumstances (and following a telephone conversation with the Taoiseach) they decided that the Irish side's readiness to accept Sir Ninian Stephen should be signalled. The tete-a-tete then resumed for half an hour or so, followed by a short plenary meeting.

Plenary

8. Mr. Brooke indicated that the Irish side had agreed that Sir Ninian Stephen would be suitable as Chairman; given the urgency of the timeframe, it was imperative that contact be established with Sir Ninian as soon as possible. Minister Collins pointed out that, particularly in light of Sir Ninian's current assignment, contact should also be made with the Australian Prime Minister's office. In order to speed matters up, it was agreed that both sides would immediately try to get in touch with their respective Embassies in Canberra (because of the time difference, it was now about 9:00 pm in Canberra); Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Archer were asked to make the necessary phone calls and report back. The Ministers resumed their tete-a-tete discussion while these calls were being made.

Contact with Canberra

9. The British side had difficulty in establishing contact with their High Commissioner in Canberra. At about 12:45 pm, Mr. Gallagher informed Ministers that the Irish Embassy had contacted Mr. Hawke's Political Adviser (Mr. White) whose

reaction had been very positive. The Irish Embassy was now in touch with the British Deputy High Commissioner and expected to make contact with Sir Ninian personally within the next couple of hours. The meeting then broke for lunch (Mr. Brooke invited Ministers to his club), with an understanding that, as and when there was further word from Canberra, the Ministers would be immediately informed.

10. The Irish side was subsequently able to report (about 2.15 pm) that our Ambassador in Canberra had now spoken to Sir Ninian personally. Sir Ninian's initial reaction was very interested and positive; he had some concerns on the security front and would obviously have to get his Government's approval before taking on the task. However, it was our Ambassador's view that the initial reaction was sufficiently positive to enable soundings to begin on an informal basis with the political parties. [Note: Mr. Brooke's view at that stage was that he should postpone giving Stephen's name to the parties until the following day; however, later in the afternoon - after the British High Commission had succeeded in contacting Sir Ninian and had reported back - Mr. Brooke changed his mind and decided to contact the parties immediately].

Timetable for Talks

11. In their tete-a-tete discussions during the morning, Ministers had addressed the question of the timetable for the talks. In a joint pre-lunch briefing of officials, they indicated that
 - it was agreed that "best endeavours" would be made to hold a meeting of Strand Two in London in the week beginning 8th July (in effect, because of the 12th, this would have to take place on either the 8th or 9th).

- The Secretary of State said that, if the parties in the North wished it, the two sides would be prepared to allocate a period of a week or ten days in July (after the Conference on the 16th) to continue the talks.
- It was generally envisaged that there would be a further Conference in early September, which would be followed by a long gap in order to facilitate the continuation of talks.

Next meeting of Liaison Group

12. In their discussion en marge of the Ministerial meeting, officials agreed that the next meeting of the Liaison Group would be in Dublin on Thursday, 20th June.

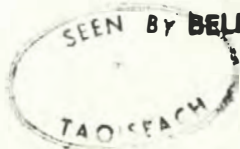
A.A.

Anne Anderson
17 June, 1991

cc: PST; PSM; Mr. Nally; PSS; Mr. Brosnan; Mr. Gallagher;
Ambassador London; Joint Secretary.

THE JOINT UNIONIST DELEGATIONS

Parliament Buildings,
Stormont,
BELFAST, BT4 3SY.



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Havel: REP
H. Havel: H. Havel
 2. REP.

15th June, 1991.

Dear Secretary of State,

Yesterday afternoon you informed us of a candidate, agreed by Mr Collins and yourself, for the second strand of the talks process. The proposal was the product of many days' research, discussion and soundings undertaken by the very extensive staff of two governments. You will recognise the difficulties which have faced us, with our limited resources coupled with the problem of obtaining information over the weekend from our sources and the added complication of the time difference between here and Australia.

While our preliminary examination of the candidate's background does not indicate any good reason for us to object to his appointment, you will understand, we cannot give you a formal and final answer until our research is completed on Monday.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Ian R. K. Paisley M.P. M.E.P.

Rt. Hon. James Molyneux M.P.

Handwritten notes:
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18/6

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
From:

Northern Ireland

Taoiseach

Dermot Gallagher phoned from London this morning to say that the British High Commissioner in Canada had approached Roy McMurtry informally. McMurtry said that in 1976 in a speech, as Attorney General, he had said that Paisley was not a proper person to visit Canada. Brooke sounded Paisley out informally this morning as to McMurtry's acceptability. Paisley said that he could not accept him.

Brooke and the Minister are at present meeting tete-a-tete.


Dermot Nally

14 June 1991