



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2021/93/54
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.

BASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

17, GROSVENOR PLACE,
SW1X 7HR
Telephone: 071-235 2171
TELEX: 916104
Fax: 071-245 6961

18

CONFIDENTIAL

BY SPECIAL BAG

P.S.M.
P.S.S.
C. Allon A1
Brx.

// September 1991

Mr. Sean O hUiginn
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division

Dear Assistant Secretary

Ken Maginnis

I had an opportunity at Brazilian National Day last Friday to speak with Ken Maginnis, M.P. for Fermanagh and South Tyrone. While much of what Maginnis had to say was along predictable lines (obsession with security matters, support for internment, etc.) and has been aired publicly by him on numerous occasions, you may find the following points of interest:

Prospects for further political talks

Maginnis considered Peter Brooke to be too optimistic by far with regard to the prospects for further talks. He doubted the DUP would be willing to participate again in a talks process involving Dublin. Paisley had blown hot and cold on the subject but was now very much under the influence of William McCrae who had "set him straight on that score". Maginnis clearly regards McCrae as wielding a lot more power within the DUP than Robinson. The question, therefore, was whether the Official Unionists would go it alone. He doubted this, given Jim Molyneaux's known opposition; "all he wants is his Select Committee." This would be a pity since, last time round the Official Unionists had favoured the talks by eight to two, with "only Molyneaux and the President of the Party opposing." Even Trimble and Martin Smyth had been in favour "when they saw the way the wind was blowing."

The current level of violence

Maginnis declared himself appalled at the level of violence in Northern Ireland in recent months and was equally condemnatory of paramilitaries on both sides. He gave vent to his well known line on the efficacy of the reintroduction of internment, narrowly focussed. He claimed that now both the GOC and the Chief Constable favour its introduction. He saw a twofold threat posed by recent loyalist violence. Firstly, it would rally the IRA and breath new life into the organisation. Secondly, it was chipping away at support for moderate and constitutional politicians such as himself. Recent Loyalist murders had been particularly successful in targeting Republican or Sinn Fein activists. The net effect in some quarters was a muttering that this was achieving more in a few months than the politicians on the Unionist side had achieved in many years!

Election prospects

For that and other reasons Maginnis told me to "expect to see my vote fall by about 3000" in the general election. There was some talk of another opponent on the Unionist side running against him but he had no fears on that score. He assumed the SDLP would again "do the decent thing" and put up a candidate, in which case he was confident he could get re-elected despite a drop in support. (He made clear that other non-security issues were also likely to influence his vote - there was currently a row simmering over the proposed amalgamation of Portora Royal School and an all-girls school with a good academic record. However that developed he was likely to lose some support on the issue).

Finally, I found Ken Maginnis to be extremely friendly and affable throughout our conversation. He spoke warmly of both Assistant Secretary Gallagher and Ms Anderson. He clearly enjoys his contacts with us.

Yours sincerely

Sean Farrell

Sean Farrell
First Secretary