



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/97/21

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.

Mr Mc Carthy

25

PST

PS

*Mr F Tunney
Mr P Deakin
Mr S Douglas
Mr T Dalton
JL*

SECURE FAX 132

IMMEDIATE

31 January, 1995

PAGES: 1

*1
2
95*

TO: HQ

FROM: BELFAST

FOR: Second Secretary O hUiginn

FROM: S. Farrell

Times Story

To confirm our phone conversation:

1. Martin Williams telephoned at 9.32 p.m. re the above.
2. Per Williams, the editor of the Times contacted 10 Downing Street a short time ago to advise that he intended to publish parts of the Joint Framework Document in tomorrow's edition. He wouldn't say what parts nor whether he possessed the whole text or only those parts which were to be published.
3. He asked the Prime Minister for a comment and, per Williams, Major did so, along "standard lines". Among the points made by the PM were that the Joint Framework Document was not yet a completed text; that important issues were still to be negotiated. It was not likely to be completed for a little time. There was no question of Joint Authority. Furthermore, any North/South institutions would be accountable "to assembly" (Williams did not have the exact words used). He went on to emphasise that when complete, the JFD would be a consultation document to be agreed with the politicians at talks and then in a referendum. There was no question of imposition.
4. Williams stated that, as of the time he was speaking, the British side did not know whether the text to be published was authentic or whether it was even the latest version. Nor did they know what portion of PM Major's comments would be published. He added that the British side had no idea where the story came from and spoke of their objective being to seek to minimize any damage done by the story.
5. The SoS has been in transit and has not yet considered how he would react. Williams mentioned that among the possibilities were issuing a statement or of contacting the Tánaiste.

Handwritten notes in red ink: "No by security" and "Jhr 1/2/95"

Handwritten notes: "Discrepancy" and "Do see please"

Handwritten circled number: "25"

Handwritten notes: "PST", "PSS", "Mr P Teahow", "Mr S O'Connell", "Mr T Dalton", "Jhr", "30/1"

SECURE FAX 125

IMMEDIATE

Handwritten: "Jhr 1/2/95"

Handwritten: "Mr Hume", "Mr Gibbin", and a signature

31 January 1995

Pages: 2

TO: EQ FROM: BELFAST
FOR: Second Secretary O hUiginn FROM: Joint Secretary

Press Stories about the Framework Document

1. Martin Williams raised with me yesterday what he described as briefing by the Irish side on the Framework Document to both British and Irish media. We had further exchanges last evening and this morning.

2. I said I had been reading stories in London and Dublin newspapers for the last several days, notably since the FT story which caused so much interest in the media before last Thursday's Informal Ministerial Meeting in London. I declined to accept that all virtue and reticence lay on the British side and I referred him to a number of stories about reassurances given to Jim Molyneaux by the Prime Minister and to a variety of pieces about the North/South bodies. Some conditioning of opinion seemed to be going on by both sides. This was reasonable enough but it could get out of hand; in current circumstances, a perception could develop that the Governments could not agree and that the JFD was dead in the water.

3. Williams had two particular points to make, both arising from reports in The Irish Times:

- Geraldine Kennedy on Saturday (page 9) reported some concern and annoyance in Dublin that the British seemed to be attempting to "test Mr Bruton" on the Constitutional questions in the vain hope that he could offer more profound alterations to Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution. Williams said of course the British were aware that the Taoiseach was coming to the matter afresh and was known to have a different position to that of Mr Reynolds, but it was wrong to suggest that some new attempt was being made because Mr Bruton was now in office. The British position on Articles 2 and 3 was longstanding, there had not been agreement at official level and they were not saying anything new now. If we were briefing otherwise, they might feel obliged to respond.
- Denis Coughlan reported yesterday on page 12 that we have urged the British authorities to consider the early transfer or release of "political prisoners". Williams asked if we had used that expression, or if it was Coughlan's own. I said it was not our usual expression and I assumed it was Coughlan's own.

2

4. Stories began to appear in the press after the UUP sent up scare balloons the week before last. The initial British reaction at official level was that there was worry among some Unionists that the JFD would not be acceptable to their supporters; but they did not detect alarm and they were inclined to put some of the noises down to internal jostling within the UUP. We did not get a read-out on Molyneaux's meetings with the Government last week but Williams now tells me that Molyneaux was very gloomy, did not think the JFD would be acceptable and was not reassured by the Secretary of State or the Prime Minister.

5. I said it seemed to us last Thursday that the Secretary of State was simply maintaining the British line on Article 2 but at the same time trying to pick the Tánaiste's pocket on the related paragraph. Moreover, amendments received here the day before had sought to row back considerably in other areas. Because the JFD was negotiated ad referendum, Ministers were of course entitled to intervene but they should realise they were in real danger of upsetting a carefully balanced applectart. Williams confirmed that Ministers were reassessing" the JFD in light of Unionist concern; it was vital that the Unionists, as well as Nationalists, should be brought along. They were considering the outcome of last Thursday's meeting and were seeing what way forward could be suggested to us on the back of it.

6. No doubt, the British have been keeping Molyneaux informed about the Framework document, but it is much less clear that the UUP as a whole has an idea of what is in store. They are considering how to deal with that situation; a speech or a very general briefing may be proposed.

7. William's asked about last Friday's meeting between the Government and Sinn Fein. I briefed him along the lines discussed. He was appreciative.