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NOTE OF A MEETING AT CHEQUERS ON SUNDAY EVENING, 26 SEPTEMBER 1971

PRESENT:	Mr Heath	Sir Burke Trend
	Mr Faulkner	Sir Harold Black
	Lord Carrington	
	Home Secretary	

Mr Heath, in sketching the scene for the Tripartite talks due to begin the following day, said the objective of the talks would be two-fold: (a) to devise ways and means of persuading the SDLP to join in the talks which were to take place under the tutelage of the Home Secretary and (b) to consider ways and means of creating a new atmosphere in which the minority would recognise that both the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland Governments were genuinely anxious to ensure equality of treatment and full regard for the interests of all sections of the Northern Ireland community. He thought that Mr Lynch had probably misjudged the situation at their earlier meeting when he had refused to take part in Tripartite talks; his decision on his arrival back in Dublin to participate after all was to be welcomed not merely because something meaningful might emerge on the three Prime Ministers talking together but because it was a clear recognition of Northern Ireland's Constitutional status - though Mr Lynch of course would be unable to say this publicly.

Mr Faulkner said that indeed Mr Lynch was publicly maintaining the contrary view, to which Mr Heath replied that this was not to be taken as being more than a ritual reaction.

Mr Heath said he thought every effort should be made during the talks to achieve a breakthrough in the sense of reaching a measure of agreement on how to deal with the Northern Ireland situation. Clearly Parliament at Westminster would expect some practical result to emerge and there were signs too that public opinion was becoming somewhat restive about the involvement of the Army. He thought we might be near the stage when the minority in Northern Ireland would become totally alienated and sour; once this occurred the gunmen would become stronger and the problem much worse. It would be necessary in the talks to aim at means of convincing the minority that they had a part to play in the Northern Ireland system and even perhaps to devise some way of jerking them out of their present

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posture and in the direction of co-operating once again in public affairs. If the Opposition could be got back to Stormont Mr Faulkner's proposals for Parliamentary reform would have some opportunity of taking effect.

Mr Faulkner said he did not think Mr Lynch carried much weight with the IRA, who would be unlikely to be affected by anything that might emerge from the talks. He therefore thought that the first objective of the talks should be to press Mr Lynch to take firmer action on security; if he could be persuaded to do so it would be necessary no doubt to consider some quid pro quo. He asked Mr Heath whether it was intended to discuss the internal Northern Ireland situation with the Prime Minister of the Republic.

Mr Heath said it would be impossible to avoid dealing with various aspects of Northern Ireland affairs. He thought it very unlikely that Mr Lynch could be persuaded to introduce internment in the South but there were many other aspects of security on which he could be asked quite properly to take stronger action. He could also be asked to use his influence to separate the Roman Catholic community in Northern Ireland from the IRA.

Mr Faulkner said he could not accept that Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland were all so totally opposed to the Government as their elected representatives and other propagandists tried to suggest. He thought it probably true that in certain limited areas in Belfast and Londonderry the IRA were able to muster a considerable degree of support but outside these he believed the Catholic community to be ready to respond favourably to his proposals for ensuring a greater measure of participation in the Parliamentary process.

The discussion turned to the withdrawal of Roman Catholic public representatives from local government etc and Mr Faulkner said that in the case, for example, of the Londonderry Commission he understood there had been a degree of intimidation by the IRA - a further reflection of the vital importance of taking every step to secure an improvement in security.

Mr Faulkner then elaborated on the reasons for pressing on with an expansion of the UDR to enable it to operate in much more localised units. Clearly the bigger the UDR the more guard duties could be undertaken and looking to the future when British public opinion might

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demand a reduction in army strength he pointed out that this would be easier in a situation where the local force was capable of undertaking a bigger proportion of the Army's task. The need for more men on the ground had been emphasised by the GOC's inability to provide men to guard police stations and other important installations. He believed internment was now beginning to bite against the IRA; more intelligence was coming through and the weight of bombing had shown some tendency to reduce in recent weeks. But overall it was impossible to avoid the feeling that not enough progress was being made against the terrorist and the Northern Ireland Government felt that it would be impossible to reduce the scale of attack until many more men on the ground were available to the security forces. Both Protestant and Catholic moderates were in agreement about the need for stronger action.

Mr Heath said that there were political implications to be considered in relation to an expansion of the UDR; these arose to some extent from the history of the 'B' Specials and opinion in Westminster was very sensitive to massive expansion of the UDR. As Mr Faulkner knew arrangements had been made to enable members of the TAVR to transfer without loss of rights to the UDR.

Mr Faulkner pointed out that the 'B' Special situation was hardly relevant to the UDR in which a considerable number of Roman Catholics were serving.

Mr Heath said that the number of Catholics in the force was tending to reduce at present.

Lord Carrington said the Regiment was being expanded and when enough recruits were enrolled local units would be formed; he was hesitant however about creating a two-tier system in which some recruits would have a purely localised function and would therefore have more restricted liability than the others. This would be bad politically and therefore the aim would be to form local units with the same obligation to be moved anywhere in Northern Ireland but obviously with a bigger force this was less likely to happen.

Mr Faulkner said there would be no difficulty in getting recruits once men knew that they would be serving in a particular locality; many did not join at present because they knew they would perform their duty at some distance from home and spend half their time travelling to and from duty. The Army were not nearly vigorous enough in going after recruits.

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Lord Carrington said he hoped to visit Northern Ireland within the next few days and he expressed his readiness to put more vigour into the recruiting campaign; he was himself very much in sympathy with the Northern Ireland point of view.

The Home Secretary referred to the activities of those who were agitating for a "third force" and Mr Faulkner said that if there were concrete evidence of a considerable expansion in the UDR the ground would be cut from under these people.

Turning to the protection of police stations Mr Faulkner explained that the Police Authority would very much prefer to have the Army responsible for supplying guards. If the United Kingdom Government were to decide that the Army definitely could not take on this task the Authority would be prepared to consider how protection could be provided within their own resources.

Lord Carrington said that so far as he was concerned he would be totally opposed to the Army assuming this responsibility and Mr Heath asked why the police could not guard their own stations.

Mr Faulkner explained that, with the concept of a fully civilianised police force which had emerged from the Hunt Report, the police were barred from carrying automatic weapons which would be necessary for any adequate defence against terrorists using Thompson sub-machine guns. In addition, 1000 men would be required and as the police force was already 1000 under the recommended establishment the Authority did not see how they could transfer so many men from normal police duties. The Police Authority were considering the possibility of a special section of the RUC Reserve being given the task of guarding police stations and would be anxious to discuss this proposition with the appropriate United Kingdom authorities.

Mr Heath referred to the shotguns which had been specially ordered for the police to enable them to protect their stations.

Mr Faulkner explained the position on this and said the shotguns were not regarded as adequate. He thought the men would feel more secure if a small number of automatic weapons could be held at each station and Mr Heath said this could be looked into.

Lord Carrington pointed out that the UDR, who had been undertaking guard duties at some stations, disliked the task and he would be

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opposed to any massive commitment of this kind being imposed on the Regiment. Although the Hunt Report did not favour automatic weapons for the police he did not see how anyone could cavil at such weapons being supplied for self-protection.

Mr Heath said this matter must be settled and consideration given to the Police Reserve assuming the duty of protecting police stations with appropriate automatic weapons.

Turning to the subject matter of the talks with Mr Lynch, Mr Faulkner enquired whether the United Kingdom authorities had any particular proposals to make.

Mr Heath said he thought the talks should embrace all relevant matters and he thought it would be unproductive to attempt to limit the topics. It was important in his view to find means of bringing the SDLP to the Home Secretary's discussions; he thought Mr Faulkner's Parliamentary proposals constituted an important step forward and if they could be discussed in depth it might be possible to reach an accommodation. Other aspects which would no doubt crop up in the talks with Mr Lynch were discrimination in jobs etc. The aim should be to see if Mr Lynch would be prepared, in the light of the discussion, to say that the minority were getting a fair deal. Mr Lynch of course would press his aspiration for a united Ireland and he (Mr Heath) would have to say on this that the British Government's attitude rested solidly on the Ireland Act of 1949. So far as any suggestion of a Northern Ireland Cabinet consisting of Opposition and Unionist Ministers on a fifty-fifty basis was concerned he would have to reply that this was a non-sensical arrangement and undemocratic. Mr Lynch might ask for some bipartite or tripartite arrangement covering the whole of Ireland and dealing with such matters as economic affairs, tourism, etc. He might indeed make some such arrangement a condition for co-operating in softening the present SDLP attitude.

Mr Faulkner indicated that he would have no objection to an All-Ireland Body being established on such non-political matters as economic co-operation and tourism; indeed co-operation at official level was continuing on these matters but it would be important to have the arrangement on an inter-Governmental rather than an inter-Parliamentary basis. The body or bodies concerned would of course have to be endowed with advisory and not executive functions.

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Mr Faulkner said he assumed that the British Government had no intention of adopting Mr Harold Wilson's proposal for a Parliamentary Commission and Mr Heath said that this was so.

Mr Heath, referring to the reforms that had been carried out in Northern Ireland, said allegations were constantly cropping up that they had not worked through effectively on the ground. The critics pointed to the continuing permanent Unionist majority and said the minority could not in this situation hope to have an effective voice. The practical problem which was facing both the British and Northern Ireland Governments was how in such a system could one arrange to give the minority credible participation. He realised the difficulties. This was the major practical problem.

Mr Faulkner agreed that there were very serious practical difficulties but he thought that when the local government elections had taken place in the Autumn of 1972 for the new district councils a number of new Nationalist councils would emerge and this would offer concrete evidence that the process of change was working. He thought most reasonable members of the minority accepted this. So far as Opposition membership of the Cabinet was concerned he did not see how it was possible to hold together a Cabinet in which some of the members were dedicated to the eventual abolition of the State; this did not mean that he was not prepared to introduce a Roman Catholic into the Cabinet. If the United Kingdom Government intended to press him to bring Mr Fitt or Mr Hume or any of their colleagues into the Government they ought to say so now; he would have to retort that this was out of the question and for himself he would have no option but to resign from the Government and he had no doubt all his existing colleagues would support him in this attitude.

Mr Faulkner went on to explain an idea - not yet fully crystalised or thought out - for a Consultative Committee to represent the minority; the Chairman of this Committee might possibly be a candidate for inclusion in the Cabinet though of course he would have to be a Roman Catholic who accepted the Constitutional position.

Mr Heath referred to the exchange which had taken place in the Westminster Debate between Mr Callaghan and Mr Fitt in which the latter had been drawn into accepting that he would be prepared to become a member of the Northern Ireland Government provided the internment issue was satisfactorily out of the way. Mr Fitt, of course, made it clear

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that he would want such an arrangement to exist as of right and not just as a concession from a Unionist Prime Minister.

Mr Heath enquired whether, if the SDLP were prepared to come into the Government and participate on the basis that Northern Ireland continued as part of the United Kingdom (that is, that the majority view on the Constitutional issue would prevail), this would be acceptable to Unionist opinion.

Mr Faulkner said he thought this an unlikely situation because the SDLP must surely continue to reiterate their aspiration for a united Ireland; in this situation it would be difficult for Unionists to accept that they were genuine in seeking to operate the system pending a change in the majority's attitude to partition. It should be remembered also that under any scheme for minorities to participate in Government Mr Paisley, Mr Craig and the Nationalists would also be entitled to representation.

In reply to a query by Lord Carrington about what the minority meant by participation, Mr Faulkner said at one stage they had certainly regarded his proposals for a fair share in the membership of public and statutory bodies plus his proposals for a new Parliamentary Committee system as participation. The SDLP might no longer subscribe to this earlier view but he felt sure that most reasonable Roman Catholics would concede that these proposals were an enormous step forward. Certainly he could not see much progress being made in the Home Secretary's talks until a vast improvement had taken place in the security situation; only when this occurred could one expect a better attitude from the Roman Catholic community, who would then feel more able to respond without the threat of intimidation. The Protestant community too would probably be inclined to react more favourably to participation proposals being pursued.

Mr Heath asked who would be responsible for nominating additional members to the Senate and Mr Faulkner said he thought this would probably be The Governor.

Mr Heath said he was very anxious to ensure that Mr Faulkner's new proposals should not be disclosed piecemeal because this tended to encourage the Opposition to keep on asking.

The Home Secretary said he was very much afraid that if the Green Paper were published prematurely it might be a case of wasting one's shot.

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Mr Faulkner said he did not think it right to defer the promised debate in the Northern Ireland House of Commons on his proposals until the SDLP came back; obviously the Green Paper would have to be published well in advance of the Debate.

The Home Secretary thought there would hardly be a meaningful debate if the Opposition were not present but Mr Faulkner said he felt he must go ahead.

Turning to action which could be taken by Mr Lynch, Mr Faulkner suggested that he should be invited to help on obtaining the return to Northern Ireland of a man who was wanted for the murder of the Police Constable in Strabane, although the Republic might well take the view that the crime in question constituted a political offence.

Mr Heath said he saw no reason why this should not be put to Mr Lynch.

It was agreed also that Mr Lynch should be pressed for help from his security forces on the control of explosives and on better co-operation to prevent the Republic being used as a launch pad for forays into the North or as sanctuary for those escaping after committing crimes in the North.

The discussion turned to the kind of Joint Communique which might emerge from the talks and Mr Faulkner emphasised that as Mr Paisley and right-wing elements in the Unionist Party were very much opposed to his presence at the Tripartite talks he hoped it would be possible to include some reassurance about the maintenance of the Constitutional position, that is to say, a re-affirmation of the provision in the Ireland Act of 1949.

Mr Heath said ~~yes~~ he would endeavour to obtain this but the integrity of the Constitutional position within the United Kingdom should not be regarded as preventing other changes in the constitution, such as Mr Faulkner had outlined in relation to Parliament and the election system.

Mr Faulkner said he accepted this distinction but any suggestion of bringing members of the Republican Opposition into the Cabinet would be regarded as tampering with the Constitution.

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Lord Carrington said that unfortunately to bring in a "tame" Roman Catholic who would work within the system would not be regarded as acceptable to the Opposition; but he quite saw that the other horn of the dilemma was that if a Republican-minded member was brought in he would be seen as wishing to destroy the system.

Mr Heath enquired about the standing and influence of the Orange Order in the Unionist Party and Mr Faulkner explained the extent to which Orange representatives had a right to representation; he pointed out that as the Order had only a small number of representatives it could not be regarded as having a very strong voice. Mr Heath said it seemed therefore there was no real reason why the Unionist Party could not be a non-sectarian party.

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