

E. R.

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Palmer

27/10

RECORD OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH THE IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER - 3.00 PM ON 13 OCTOBER AT 1 CARLTON GARDENS

Those present:

UK: Secretary of State
Sir Kenneth Stowe
Mr Leonard Figg (HM Ambassador Dublin)
Miss Kelley
Mr Palmer
Mr Newington
Mr Moriarty
Mr Gilliland
Mr Buxton
Mr Harrington

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND: Mr Lenihan
Dr Kennedy (Irish Ambassador London)
Mr O'Rourke
Mr Dempsey
Mr Nelligan
Mr Whelan
Mr Burke
Mr Smith

The Secretary of State opened the meeting by welcoming Mr Lenihan to London. Mr Lenihan replied, and set the present meeting in the context of the forthcoming meeting between the two Prime Ministers.

2. Politics

The Secretary of State summarised the action which the present Government had taken on the political front since they came into office. He reminded Mr Lenihan that the British Government would of course keep the Irish Government informed about such matters, but they were not a matter for detailed discussion between them. The latest round of discussions with the political parties had been private, and the confidences which all had entered into had been respected. It was no secret that the discussions were proving difficult, but the Secretary of State was confident that the people of Northern Ireland wanted to make progress and he would continue to try to do so. It would not be practicable to adopt an abrupt change of course: if they were to try to do so, there would immediately be pressure for a much more integrationist approach. He would be discussing the progress which had been made so far with his Cabinet colleagues within the next few weeks.

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3. The Secretary of State emphasised that he saw real difficulty in importing an Irish Dimension, in the terms in which it was normally intended, into the talks. No doubt the Irish Government were pressed hard by the representatives of the minority community on this point but Mr Lenihan should realise the strength of feeling of the majority community on this issue - the Secretary of State would undoubtedly be criticised merely for talking to Mr Lenihan. Nevertheless, the British Government stood by their commitment to two essential pre-requisites to any political progress. Whatever was set up must provide a worthwhile role for the minority community and must be broadly acceptable to the people of Northern Ireland as a whole.
4. Mr Lenihan welcomed the acceptance that the minority community must be a part of any arrangements introduced in the North. He believed this enhanced the need for parallel understandings^{between} the Governments of the two islands". There was an urgent need for inter-Government consultation because otherwise a Northern Ireland settlement could not be made acceptable to the minority. He was not convinced that the approach which the Dublin Government had in mind need be unacceptable to, or create great fears for, the Protestants in the North.
5. The Secretary of State thought Mr Lenihan underestimated the difficulties. Mr Haughey had been reported as proposing a quadripartite discussion between the two Governments and leaders of the main political parties in the North. It was not clear from what Mr Lenihan himself had said whether the sort of inter-Governmental discussions he had in mind would include or exclude the Northern Ireland political parties.
6. Mr Lenihan replied that his Government were not irrevocably committed to a quadripartite conference: they would be prepared to look at different ways of holding discussions in parallel.
7. The Secretary of State welcomed this clarification. The British Government would be required to make some sort of statement of their intentions in the Queen's speech, before the meeting of the two Prime Ministers. Inevitably, at the present stage, the Queen's speech would

not be entirely specific on this point but it would certainly contain no surprises for the Irish Government. The Government remained determined to find a way forward, and were fully committed to involving the minority community and winning acceptability to the people of the Province as a whole.

8. Mr Lenihan hoped that the Queen's speech would not exclude the sort of ideas which he had described. The Secretary of State reminded Mr Lenihan that one of the Government's problems was to persuade people in Northern Ireland that it was right even for the Secretary of State and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic to meet at all. The Government of the Republic needed to take the opportunity to persuade Unionists that the unique relationship between the Republic and the United Kingdom was no threat to them. Mr Lenihan should continue carrying this process of reassurance forward by, for example, meeting representatives of Unionist opinion.

9. Security

The Secretary of State remarked upon the steady successes which the security forces on both sides of the Border were having: his professional security advisers confirmed that co-operation across the Border was working well, although no doubt there remained room for improvement. The level of terrorist activity in the North was lower than it had been but matters remained very difficult in Border areas. There continued to be pressure for the closure of Border roads and terrorist activity in Border areas posed a significant risk of backlash.

10. Mr Lenihan commented that significant progress was being made. He was worried that UDR personnel were not always above suspicion of unlawful activity, but recent arrests made clear that the security forces would act indiscriminately against crime. He welcomed the fact that the police were moving forward and the Army were being held more in reserve.

11. Mr Lenihan referred to the risk of a hunger strike in the Maze Prison. He hoped that the Government would continue to pursue humanitarian considerations because the success of security co-operation

across the Border could be jeopardised by such a hunger strike, which would be worse if it extended into British Prisons. The Secretary of State replied that the Government's position had been spelt out very clearly. They were not prepared to accept that one crime was different from another because of the motives for which it was committed - it was the Pope who had said that there was no other name for murder but murder. The recent report of the European Commission On Human Rights had confirmed the Government's assertion that the discomforts of the protesters were entirely self-inflicted. The Government had offered eight changes for humanitarian reasons, concerning visits, letters, exercise, association, medical treatment out of prison uniform, the availability of reading material, closed visits to avoid personal searches, and compassionate home leave. So far none of them had been taken up.

12. Mr Lenihan noted the efforts which had been made but urged the British Government to keep to a flexible approach.

13. Mr Lenihan asked about the cases of Dolours Price and Pauline McLaughlin. The Government had been right to release Marian Price, but might now find it a gesture to release these two other girls. The Secretary of State said that both remained under review, but there was no case for action in either case at present.

14. Mr Lenihan welcomed the return of some land to the GAA in Crossmaglen but expressed concern about the continued use by the Army of their right-of-way to a rear entrance. The Secretary of State replied that for as long as attacks were made upon the security forces there the base would be needed, including the alternative entrance. But it would be used as little as possible.

15. The Economy

Mr Lenihan expressed a hope that the British Government, like the Government of the Republic, would make full use of funds available in the non-quota element of the regional fund. There was scope for overt co-operation between the North and the South by synchronising their projects.

16. It was agreed that officials would continue to keep in close touch and would provide an agreed note for the two Prime Ministers before they met in December.

17. Energy

Both sides welcomed the work going on between the two Governments to consider the scope for a variety of alternative electricity inter-connections. The Secretary of State commented that there had been a risk, as a result of some comments from the South, that expectations of an early inter-connection of gas supplies might be raised to an unjustifiable extent: even if any such arrangement were eventually to come into being, it could not be for very many years.

18. Londonderry/Dublin Air Link

The Secretary of State explained that it was now quite clear that no private operator was prepared to run more than a charter taxi service between Londonderry and Dublin unless a very large subsidy were paid. The British Government did not regard that as a wise expenditure of resources. They would need to make known to John Hume and the Londonderry City Council the decision that the British Government could not pay such a subsidy.

19. The Carlingford Lough Ferry

The Secretary of State noted that the Attorney General of the Republic of Ireland was looking at the legal feasibility of rearranging the Carlingford Lough Commission to overcome the difficulty that Mr O'Rahilly, on the Republic's side of the Lough, was refusing to pay the dues. Mr Lenihan agreed that there was no problem of principle from his side provided the lawyers saw no obstacle. He undertook to impress upon the Attorney General the urgency of the matter.

20. Salmon Poaching

The Secretary of State told Mr Lenihan that Mr Giles Shaw would shortly be raising with the Irish Minister for Fisheries, Mr Power, the problem of salmon poaching in the Foyle Estuary. There was a serious danger of stocks being depleted to a level from which they could not recover.

21. The Meeting concluded at about 5.00 pm. A copy of the brief
.... communique is attached.

R A Harrington

R A HARRINGTON
Private Secretary
20 October 1980

Distribution:

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The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins MP had discussions today in London with the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Brian Lenihan TD. The talks were preceded by a working lunch, hosted by the Rt Hon Sir Ian Gilmour Bt MP the Lord Privy Seal, at which European Community and other international issues were discussed.

The Secretary of State and the Minister for Foreign Affairs exchanged views on political, economic and security issues of common concern, in the context of the closer political co-operation between the two Governments agreed by the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister on 21 May.

The Secretary of State and the Minister for Foreign Affairs looked forward to further regular meetings.