

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE SPECIAL MEETING:
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE, LONDON, 29 JULY 1986

<u>Participants:</u>	Mr. King	Mr. Barry
	Mr. Scott	Mr. Donlon
	Sir Robert Andrew	Mr. Lillis
	Mr. Elliott	Mr. O Tuathail

1. After initial courtesies, Mr. Barry said that the two sides had not agreed over the Portadown marches on and after 12 July, but they should now put their differences behind them. He suggested that the meeting should concentrate on cross-border security co-operation, and on the future implementation of the Agreement. His perception was that the Agreement was not achieving much yet for nationalists.

Parades and Marches

2. Mr. King said that the Portadown events had shown that the RUC was successfully imposing its will, and that responsible Orangemen did not approve of confrontation. The influence of UUP leaders and of the Churches was beginning to tell. In fact the vast majority of marches passed off peacefully. If the Irish intervened publicly to condemn decisions taken by the RUC, or pressed for a particular routing decision, then they risked provoking unionist opinion and aiding the DUP cause. Mr. Scott added that Orangemen had now decided that they could not win against the RUC. Mr. Barry said that Irish perceptions of these events were different, and they were convinced that some marches had no purpose other than provocation and triumphalism, but they admitted that others were genuinely traditional.

3. Mr. Barry referred to the idea put forward by the Chief Constable in his annual report, that an independent tribunal be established to consider marches. The aim should be to allow no marches to pass through where they were not welcomed. Mr. Donlon said that the function of the tribunal might be to determine what areas were acceptable for marches by a particular community, and what routes could be described as genuinely traditional. Mr. King said that the Chief Constable's suggestion had not

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been based on a full study, but it had not been completely ruled out. However there were problems; who would sit on the tribunal? and what would happen if marchers' plans changed after the tribunal had pronounced? Mr. Scott added that some trouble-makers might simply ignore a tribunal's rulings. The police would always have to be involved in taking decisions on the spot. Sir Robert Andrew said that police decisions were by statute to be taken for reasons of public order, not politics. The Chief Constable's suggestion for a tribunal was intended to given him some cover against political criticism. Mr. King said that once the current marching season was over the British side would be happy to sit down and look at the lessons we had learned; that would be the time for a debate on the future. Mr. Barry said that the Irish side would put in a note of their views.

4. Mr. Barry said that the Irish were concerned about the prospects for the marches on 9 August. The Provisionals were hoping that the RUC would be provoked into shooting a nationalist, with resultant propaganda value for PIRA, and might try to engineer this.

Cross-Border Security Co-operation

5. Mr. Scott said that the murder of three RUC men in Newry over the weekend had underlined the importance of cross-border security co-operation. Progress had to be made on this if the Agreement was ever to win Unionist support. The quadripartite group and the study groups set up by the two police forces were working on the fundamental issues for the longer term. Mr. Dukes' statement about Garda deployments immediately before the 12 July weekend, arising out of Mr. Scott's own telephone conversation with Mr. Barry, had been useful. (Mr. Barry interjected a remark at this point to indicate that the Irish were not ready to accept that there had been misunderstandings about the supposed assurances given during this conversation, and that the matter could now be laid to rest.) However, a recent series of visits to RUC divisions had produced evidence of a worrying lack of response from the Garda to routine requests from the RUC. At the local level co-operation appeared to be inadequate. Mr. Scott said that a full and detailed note would be passed through the Secretariat when he had completed his round of visits, and thereafter he proposed to discuss it with Mr. Dukes. The achievement of effective cross-border security co-operation would be a long haul, but progress would be more rapid if each side understood each other's

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problems. Mr. Barry agreed that the first step should be for a detailed note to be passed through the Secretariat.

6. Mr. Scott mentioned the specific case of Clady, where the PVCP on the Northern Ireland side had recently been attacked twice from the Irish side. The RUC view was that one of the two border crossings at Clady should be closed and the other covered by an effective PVCP on the Irish side. But it had proved impossible to elicit a comment from the Garda on the central question of a permanent post. Mr. Barry said that he had been assured that the Garda had a PVCP at the point in question. Mr. Lillis added that it had the definite purpose of preventing sniping from the Irish side, and was not just a casual observation post. Mr. Donlon said that the cost of this PVCP was very high; if it was not effective, then the Irish side would have to look urgently at the question. Any difficulty of this kind could be investigated quickly if put through the Secretariat. (Over dinner the Irish again urged that full use should be made of the Secretariat, which had immediate access to the highest level in Dublin, to investigate complaints.)

7. Mr. Lillis said that observation from the Irish side suggested that some check-points on the British side were not working perfectly either. Moreover in some areas, such as South Armagh, there appeared to be very little police (as distinct from Army) activity. This caused problems of communication for the Irish. Mr. Barry said that it was a matter of principle for the Irish that the police should be in the front line, with the Army in support. But Irish army units were deployed throughout the border area, at a cost of "millions". Mr. Donlon said that the British Military Attache in Dublin had toured Irish army units and could give details.

8. There was a brief exchange about border crossings from either side in hot pursuit, in which the figure of 5 kilometers on either side of the border was mentioned as the accepted limit in the case of helicopter flights.

9. At a later stage (over dinner) Mr. Lillis put forward the argument that the current upsurge of PIRA terrorist activity across the border demonstrated that PIRA were seriously concerned about the effects of the Agreement in bringing about successful cross-border security co-operation, and needed therefore to show by terrorist acts that the

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Agreement was failing in its purpose. In the Irish view both sides could draw some encouragement from this development, and might make some public use of the argument.

10. A joint statement (text attached) was agreed during the meeting. There was some internal debate on the Irish side about the mention of September as the date for the next meeting, but Mr. Barry was content. Over dinner it was suggested that the venue for the September meeting might be somewhere in the Republic other than Dublin or Cork (Mr. Barry's constituency).

11. The tone of the meeting was friendly. The Irish seemed to have recognised that they over-reacted to events in Portadown on 12 July and were ready to mend fences. But they made it clear that they expect the Agreement to deliver something of substance for the nationalists in the autumn.

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ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

Special Meeting - 29 July 1986

A special meeting of the Conference, chaired by Mr Tom King MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and by Mr Peter Barry TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs, was held in London on 29 July 1986 at the request of the Irish side.

The Conference considered a number of recent sectarian outrages and other acts of terrorism. They called on everybody North and South to stand firmly against those who carry out such attacks and to co-operate fully with the security forces in their efforts to seek out those responsible. They agreed that every effort would be made to enhance effective co-operation between the security forces of the two Governments in order to defeat terrorism in all its forms.

At this eighth meeting of the Conference the Joint Chairmen reviewed the progress to date of the Conference and of its working groups. They agreed that the next meeting would be held in September, and that it would consider legal matters including the administration of justice, cross-border security co-operation, relations between the security forces in Northern Ireland and the community, and economic and social issues.