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FROM: PS/DR MAWHINNEY
1 MARCH 1989



cc PS/Minister of State (L&B)
PS/Dr Mawhinney (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
① PS/Sir K Bloomfield
Mr Burns
Mr Miles
Mr Thomas
Mr Blackwell
Mr J McConnell
Mr Kirk
Mr Daniell

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L)

② Mr. Spence

Mr. [unclear]

signature

to see a return pl

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NOTE OF DR MAWHINNEY'S MEETING WITH DR EBERHARD SPIECKER ON
27 FEBRUARY

1. Dr Mawhinney met Dr Spiecker and Dr John Thompson at 2.00pm
Monday 27 February in Stormont Castle. Mr Burns also attended.

2. Dr Mawhinney welcomed Dr Spiecker and passed on the Secretary of
State's greetings. The Secretary of State had asked him, with his
responsibility for political affairs, to discuss any matters
Dr Spiecker wished to talk about. The Minister thanked him for the
important role he had played in the Duisburg process and said that
this had touched a chord in the minds of a number of people. As the
Secretary of State had said we were encouraged that politicians in
Northern Ireland saw the need to talk together and reach agreement.
We had been aware in general terms of the meeting at Duisburg and of
the contacts which had flowed from it, but no doubt our knowledge
was incomplete. He invited Dr Spiecker to give his thoughts on the
talks.

3. Dr Spiecker spoke of his extreme frustration of the Duisburg
talks having been made public. They had not finished and were of
the utmost confidentiality. He described the whole matter becoming
common knowledge and the BBC's featuring of it as a major news item
as a "Fireball". He said he must now look for a chance to

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move the party leaders in NI but this "fireball" had pushed them into a corner and it would not be easy to move them. During his visit to the Province he had met many people who had urged him to continue his work. Dr Mawhinney enquired as to whether Dr Spiecker had had direct contact with the party leaders at anytime. He said he had only had contact with the deputy party leaders but produced a letter which James Molyneaux had sent to him criticising the BBC for their role in publicising the Duisburg talks.

4. Dr Spiecker referred to his personal proposal in his letter of 30 January to the Secretary of State. He suggested that if NI party leaders were to agree to this proposal, and Government was to concede that a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference should not take place for an agreed period, then it might be possible to incorporate the Anglo Irish Agreement in a greater Isles agreement.

5. Dr Herr Spiecker defined the proposals discussed at Duisburg in two parts:-

Part one - decision of those present

That a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference should not be held for an agreed period to facilitate dialogue between the Constitutional Parties in NI.

Part two - items for consideration

This included participants in the Duisburg Conference seeking agreement from their Party Leaders to part one above. The SDLP to request both Governments to consider part one; the Secretary of State would then invite the OUP and DUP to meet him; and all this would allow Unionists to meet their manifesto commitments.

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6. Dr Mawhinney enquired if from subsequent discussions Dr Spiecker had any reason to believe that the Party Leaders were likely to agree to part two above and together approach Government. Dr Spiecker said he was informed before the 'fireball' that they were moving to this point of view but following it they were in a corner.

7. Dr Mawhinney said that no agreement between the Party leaders or proposition about the Conference meeting had been put to us. If the 4 main Constitutional Parties in NI were to find an area of agreement and then approach Government together this agreement would be looked at very seriously. There was no shortage of ideas around but it was evident that any proposal would have to have the support of the majority of both sections of the community. The Secretary of State had been stressing for a long time the need for inter-party talks and greater involvement of local elected representatives in Government but the initiatives to achieve progress had to be taken by the parties themselves. That is why we hoped for a positive response to the ideas set out in the Secretary of State's speech [Dr Mawhinney handed over a copy of the speech].

8. Mr Burns enquired whether Dr Spiecker had had any contact with the participants in Duisburg since the 'fireball'. Dr Spiecker said that during his visit to NI he had some contact. The SDLP had said Duisburg was a success as it had created a new atmosphere and the parties now trusted each other. He was told that if he had been at the Prime Minister's recent meeting with the Party Leaders he would have seen this new atmosphere. He hoped to have a meeting with John Hume in Brussels next week to see what he could do. Dr Spiecker said he realised that there needed to be some concession by those on the Republican side of the SDLP and that the British Government needed to give a concession to Unionists.

9. Dr Mawhinney asked Dr Spiecker what concession he thought was needed to allow the SDLP actively to pursue the devolution

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process in Northern Ireland. Herr Spiecker said that, on the nationalist side, there must be a chance for an all-Ireland dimension, the SDLP had to appease that faction of its party. Dr Thompson felt that the SDLP's ambition was for an all-Ireland government and that they were not strongly committed to devolution.

10. Dr Mawhinney said we had heard that gaps in Anglo-Irish Conference meetings had been talked about at Duisburg but we had not heard any mention of the suspension of the Secretariat. Dr Herr Spiecker said they had had 10-12 hrs discussion at Duisburg which he had chaired - all things had been discussed. He then went on to say it had been too early to discuss such a sensitive issue.

11. Dr Mawhinney mentioned that we knew of a fifth invited person attending at Duisburg; could Dr Spiecker tell us something of his contribution? Dr Spiecker said this "fifth person" - he did not mention his name throughout - had a most difficult role to play. In choosing someone to come to Duisburg to represent the Republican movement they needed someone "acceptable" to Unionists, who knew the views of Sinn Fein, though not a member, and would be able to report back to them. Dr Spiecker said it had not been easy for this "fifth person" to confirm the decision of the Duisburg talks, but he had said during a recent conversation that "I will confirm it and I will maintain it". When pushed further by both Mr Burns and the Minister as to what exactly this person would confirm, Dr Spiecker did not give a direct answer. This fifth person had however confirmed that his ideas were similar to those of Dr Spiecker, his only reservation being the Anglo-Irish Agreement which he thought would not be necessary in its present form.

12. Dr Mawhinney reiterated that Duisburg had formulated an interesting set of ideas - that was one approach. The question now was whether the will existed on the part of the parties to make further progress. He explained again our current approach, and that

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we would be exploring current party positions and ideas about future government, to see if common ground could be found between the 4 main constitutional parties to enable progress to further talks. The Duisburg process had been a vital point in the parties talking to each other.

13. Mr Burns said it was interesting that each of the 4 main party leaders had stood by their deputies following the publicity of the Duisburg talks. Even if this solidarity was the only thing to come out of Duisburg, we were extremely grateful for it.

14. Finally Dr Spiecker drew attention to his proposal that if a constitution was agreed unanimously by the NI political parties, that it should be accepted by means of a referendum. The Minister and Mr Burns explained that, if the main constitutional parties were to suggest a solution in the broader context which involved a referendum, and if it was a proposal from all the parties, then Government would have to think very seriously about it.

15. Dr Spiecker said if he had a role to play he would do so. Dr Mawhinney thanked him and Dr Thompson and confirmed to Dr Thomson that the Moderator had been kept informed of arrangements for the meeting. Dr Mawhinney said that his door was always open to both, and he hoped they would keep in touch.

16. Dr Spiecker asked that his greetings be conveyed to the Secretary of State.

Rosalind Earnshaw

ROSALIND EARNSHAW

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