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22 Iúil 1970

Dear Ó Nualláin ,

Please refer to your letter (S.9361 V.) of 13th instant about the letter of 11th July received by the Taoiseach from the British Prime Minister and also to the subsequent message dated 15th July from Mr. Heath to the Taoiseach.

We consider that the Taoiseach might send a reply to the message of 15th July. The attached draft has been prepared in the Department for the Taoiseach's consideration. There is one aspect of this draft which we would wish you to bring especially to the notice of the Taoiseach and that is that we are concerned that, in our desire to get constructive dialogue going with Mr. Heath on the question of a solution for the long-term problem of the North, we should not say anything in writing at this stage which might move him to react in a negative way before the Taoiseach has had a meeting with him. While the attached draft is carefully worded there is always the possibility of a negative reaction. The Taoiseach may wish to consider the draft from this point of view.

With regard to the question of a possible meeting between the Taoiseach and Mr. Heath later this year, Mr. Heath is down to speak on 23rd October at the special Anniversary Session of the United Nations and tentative bookings for 21st and 22nd October have been made for the Taoiseach in case he should decide to speak at the UN in this special Session. This could provide an opportunity for a meeting with Mr. Heath without giving rise to public expectation here of an outcome to the meeting or to fears in the North as to the purpose of the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

An Dr. N. S. Ó Nualláin
Rúnaí
Roinn an Taoisigh

The 22nd has been chosen by the T. for D/EA arrangements.
S

DRAFT

My dear Prime Minister,

Many thanks for your message of 15th July. It encourages me in my belief that cooperation between our Governments can help greatly to resolve tensions in the North and bring us closer to a better arrangement of affairs among the interested parties.

You will, of course, have noticed from my speech of 11th July that I consider the fundamental difficulty to be one of resolving the tendency of two major Irish traditions to draw apart from each other. As they are bound up together in so many ways I conceive it to be impossible to continue along this path without grave damage to the North, to Ireland and to Anglo-Irish relations.

This tendency must, therefore, be reversed in the interest of all our communities. There is no thought in my mind of imposing solutions against the will of sizeable numbers of people but the process of obtaining a better future needs to begin somewhere and needs to begin soon. The North is caught in a historic dilemma which it cannot resolve by itself. We and our associates can help to open the way to a new kind of future by knowing each other's minds and cooperating along the same direction.

I regard Dr. Hillery's conversations with Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Mr. Barber as important in this context. I hope very much that their conversations will continue and be fruitful.

- 2 -

I also hope that perhaps sometime later in the year
an opportunity may arise for us to meet each other.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Honourable Edward Heath, M.P.