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**Title:** Note [by an officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs] of a meeting on 27 June 1973 with Tom Conaty and Canon Padraig Murphy of the Falls Road Central Citizens' Defence Committee, in which the issue of civil service reform in Northern Ireland, murders by loyalist paramilitaries, and attempts to persuade the Irish Republican Army to agree to a ceasefire were discussed.

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*Original given to  
Taoiseach 28/6/73  
29/6/73*

*Mr. Mac...  
Mr. Mac...*

Note on meeting with Mr. Tom Conaty and Canon Padraig Murphy  
Belfast on 27th June, 1973.

Mr. Tom Conaty and Canon Padraig Murphy, Belfast, called on me yesterday afternoon and remained with me for about an hour and a half. They had a number of points to make as back-ground briefing for the Taoiseach's visit with Mr. Heath, as follows:

(1) The most important matter being left undone by the Whitelaw administration was the reform of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Whatever general reform proposals are suggested or whatever reform agreements are made, the old guard in the senior civil service will frustrate all attempts at reform, particularly in the Department of Home Affairs. It may be that, with his experience of the British Civil Service, Mr. Whitelaw may not be convinced as to the absolute necessity for reform of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The ill-effects of the retention of the Protestant higher civil servants are apparent in the terms of reference for every public board, in the personnel of such boards and in their staffing.

A note dated June, 1973, about the position, was left with me by Mr. Conaty (attached) as well as a copy letter to Mr. Whitelaw by Mr. O'Hare, dated 19th June (attached).

(2) Mr. Conaty said that every year assassinations in the North, particularly assassinations of minority people, rise to a peak in July. The June figure this year for assassinations is already twice as high as that for June last year. If present trends continue and if the Whitelaw administration shows no sign of taking more effective action against the violent elements in the Protestant community, both of my callers said that assassinations in July this year will be two or three times the high figure of last July.

I.R.A. violence was directed against the British army and against the business community and public institutions. The British army, to counter this, had set up numerous army posts in the Catholic ghetto areas. It was felt by my callers that these posts had a great deterrent effect and were showing a big dividend of arrests of suspected members of the I.R.A. There were no similar posts in the Protestant ghetto areas, and while those areas were subject to periodic army patrolling, it was apparent to everyone that there was no sustained effective prevention of Protestant violence by the British army. Another factor which promoted Protestant violence was that the courts, the juries and the Protestant police were largely negating the prosecution of U.D.A. and other Protestant extremists. The C.C.D.C. has produced a special booklet for issue next week on the subject of the R.U.C., high-lighting the denial of the promised reform of that force. Publication of the booklet is embargoed for Wednesday night next, 3rd/4th July - copy attached.

In this connection Mr. Conaty said that he felt from the nature of some of Mr. Whitelaw's recent public statements on the R.U.C. that some further major reform or re-constitution of that force may be contemplated. It might be possible for the Taoiseach to elicit some information on this matter during his talks with Mr. Heath.

(3) In order to keep down the temperature in the North in July and to save some Catholic lives, my callers felt that an attempt should be made, generally and in relation to the talks with Mr. Heath, to avoid any public mention of the Council of Ireland.



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(4) For the same reason my callers felt that the authorities here should mount a few well-publicised security searches in border areas as soon as possible this month or early next month.

(5) My callers criticised the terms of Section 19 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Bill. Its terms suited the normal type of society in Britain or in the 26-Counties but could not be effective in Northern Ireland. American legislation on racial discrimination was much more effectively framed. Mr. Conaty said that they had been advised by counsel that it would be a contravention of the Northern Ireland Constitution Bill, when enacted, to attempt to increase the number of Catholics being employed in Harland and Wolff in order to correct the appalling religious imbalance existing there or to set up new industries with a largely Catholic work-force in order to redress the general balance.

My callers also criticised the terms of Section 25(6) of the Bill which was geared for the reasonable society but certainly not for the type of administration and society existing in the 6-Counties where the minority had good reason for not being satisfied with the motivation of the Departments and the advice they were in the habit of giving.

My callers also expressed some misgivings about Section 7(4) of the Bill which seems to them to imply a dangerous duplication of authority.

#### I.R.A.

My callers spent some time discussing their current attempt to get the I.R.A. to agree to a cease-fire. Their objective was to impress on the administration here how important it was to ensure that, if negotiations with the I.R.A. for a cease-fire went ahead, action by the Government here or by the British Government would not hinder the attainment of a cease-fire. They said they felt from the tone of the I.R.A. reply to their public appeal for a cease-fire that the I.R.A. were ripe for the end of their campaign of violence (copies of appeal and response attached). They could not give me any idea as to how they thought the Government here might foul-up the possibility of a cease-fire being arranged. On the one hand they seemed to favour publicised action by the army and the gardaí against the I.R.A. and on the other hand seemed to be trying to arrange that the I.R.A. men who might contribute to the successful negotiation of the cease-fire would not be interfered with by our forces. They did not rate the chances of the successful negotiation of a cease-fire as high as 50/50 but felt that they were bound to respond to any signs of a possibility for the negotiation of such a cease-fire. They were certain that the majority of the people in the Catholic ghetto areas in Belfast were sick to death of I.R.A. activity. A further favourable factor was the high level of arrests of known I.R.A. men by the security forces in the North and the extent to which I.R.A. activity was now being carried on by girls and youths. My callers could give me no idea as to what the nature of the requests to the Government was likely to be. I said that the Taoiseach or the Government would, of course, consider any requests or appeals made to them in this connection although previous approaches did not provide any grounds for any optimism as to the outcome of the moves being made by the CCDC.

I informed my callers that I would give a full note of their representations to the Taoiseach before his meeting with Mr. Heath.

28th June, 1973.