

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



**Reference Code:** 2005/151/704

**Title:** Note of visit to Liam Cosgrave, TD, Taoiseach, by Sir Arthur Galsworthy, United Kingdom Ambassador to Ireland to discuss various matters, including the cease-fire talks with Sinn Féin, security co-operation and European Community majority voting

**Creation Date(s):** 4 February 1975

**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 3 pages

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Access Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

SECRET

The British Ambassador called to see the Minister this afternoon and raised the following matters.

Cease-fire Talks

The Ambassador gave an account of a third meeting which had taken place between NIO officials and Sinn Féin representatives. He was not sure when it had taken place but thought it was at the weekend (1/2 February). The background to the meeting was their assessment that the Provos were still interested in a cease-fire and Rees was under pressure, e.g. from Churchmen, not to give up while there was still hope. The British did not want to give the Provos a propaganda victory by not being seen to respond to the pressure from the Churchmen. While violence was still continuing, it was sporadic and might be explained by the fact that some elements in the movement were not responsive to central control. In addition they had hard intelligence information that the Provos were in fact trying to turn the violence off.

The purpose of the recent contact, according to the Ambassador, was to explain British policy and not to negotiate. The NIO officials found that the Sinn Féin representatives were still politically very naive and did not seem to have the remotest understanding of British policy. The main item discussed at the meeting was what effective communication arrangements might be made for use in a cease-fire situation. The Sinn Féin representatives still wanted a direct contact between the IRA and the British Army but the British were not prepared to go beyond the arrangement under which named British Government officials and named Sinn Féin contacts could contact one another speedily and directly should the need arise. The

British Ambassador said that the Sinn Féin people showed considerable interest in the discussion on contact arrangements.

The British assessment of the situation was still the same as it was a week ago, viz., that there would be a continuation of a broken backed warfare situation in N.I. (He made no reference to their assessment of the situation regarding violence in Britain.)

In regard to the Loyalist reaction to the NIO officials/Sinn Féin talks, the Ambassador said that Rees had met a large UUUC delegation the previous day and that by and large the UUUC people seemed reasonably relaxed about the talks.

#### Security Co-operation

The Ambassador handed the Minister a letter from the Secretary of State for N.I. A copy is attached. Following a quick reading of the letter, the Minister commented that it seemed a pity that the information about explosives smuggling was only now being given but the Ambassador said that they had already passed considerable information on explosives and detonators and some on gun smuggling. He was, however, unable to be specific as to the channel of communication used or the dates on which the information was passed. The Minister pointed out that he had repeatedly asked for this information over the last six weeks and that in the absence of a detailed response he had to assume that the information had not in fact been passed.

In regard to the suggested meeting with Bourne and a Home Office official, the Minister commented that this seemed a good idea but it was primarily a matter for the Minister

for Justice to whom the request would immediately be referred.

EC Majority Voting

The Ambassador left an Aide Memoire with the Minister about the British understanding of what was agreed at the Paris summit. The Minister explained his understanding of what had been agreed and suggested that if the British Foreign Secretary wished to pursue the matter further, he could raise it at the lunch before the Council meeting in Brussels next week.

Seán Donlon

4 February 1975