

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

**IRELAND**



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CODED MESSAGE	
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Signed	Mac Murchin

TO HQ FROM LONDON  
FOR DONLON FROM CAMPBELL

IN CUBBON'S ABSENCE I SAW JAMES YESTERDAY AT THE NIO ABOUT LAST WEEK'S MEETINGS. JAMES WAS AT BOTH MEETINGS HIMSELF. HE MADE A POINT OF EMPHASISING THAT BOTH WERE AT THE REQUEST OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES CONCERNED.

### MEETING WITH SDLP

HE THOUGHT THE MEETING WITH THE SDLP HAD GONE QUITE WELL. MASON'S LINE HAD BEEN THAT EXPRESSED BY HIM IN DUBLIN. JAMES HAD NEVER SEEN PADDY DEVLIN IN MORE RESTRAINED FORM. HE (DEVLIN) DIDN'T UTTER A SINGLE FOUR-LETTER WORD THROUGHOUT AND AT THE END REMARKED THAT THE MEETING HAD BEEN "A VERY GOOD ONE". HUME HAD SUBSEQUENTLY DESCRIBED IT AS MUCH MORE USEFUL THAN HE HAD EXPECTED AS REGARDS INFLUENCING THE "WILD MEN" IN THE PARTY.

MASON HAD MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT HE WAS NOT GOING TO IMPOSE SOLUTIONS BUT HE ALSO ARGUED STRONGLY THAT HE HAD BEEN PUTTING PRESSURE CONSISTENTLY ON THE UNIONISTS. HE OUTLINED WHAT HE HAD DONE ON THIS INCLUDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LAST OCTOBER'S DEVELOPMENTS IN BRINGING NEAVE BACK INTO LINE.

JAMES MENTIONED INCIDENTALLY THAT THE PRESSURES WHICH THIS LATTER DEVELOPMENT HAD EXERTED ON THE UNIONISTS WERE EXTREMELY SIGNIFICANT.

MASON HAD REPEATED THAT THERE WAS NO WAY OF FINDING A BASIS FOR DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT UNLESS THE POLITICAL PARTIES SHOWED THE WILLINGNESS TO COME TOGETHER TO TALK. THIS NEEDED COOPERATION FROM BOTH SIDES.

MOLYNEAUX'S INITIATIVE WAS AT LEAST A SIGN OF MOVEMENT. MASON MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS HOLDING NO PARTICULAR BRIEF FOR THE INITIATIVE AS SUCH; BUT INsofar AS IT INDICATED A READINESS TOWARDS MOVEMENT IT WAS A HOPEFUL SIGN. IT SHOULD BE SEEN AS A DEFINITE MOVE AWAY FROM THE CONVENTION REPORT OR NOTHING LINE.

*(but had made a distinction  
between the RUC & the Reserves)*

SEAMUS MALLON HAD CONCENTRATED ON SECURITY ISSUES AND MASON HAD GONE OVER HIS POLICY GENERALLY ON THIS. EDEVLIN HAD ACTUALLY PRAISED THE RUC RESERVES AND THE WELL-KNOWN SDLP VIEWS ON INFILTRATION OF THE RUC RESERVES AND THE UDR HAD BEEN REITERATED.

THE SDLP SIDE HAD RAISED THE QUESTION OF PR FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS BUT MASON HAD NOT RESPONDED SUBSTANTIVELY, INDICATING ONLY THAT HE HAD TAKEN FULL NOTE OF THE SDLP'S VIEWS.

IN GENERAL, MASON HAD BEEN FAIRLY SATISFIED WITH THE MEETING AND THOUGHT THAT IT HAD GIVEN THE SDLP MEMBERS PRESENT SOME REASSURANCE.

#### MEETING WITH THE OUP

WEST, ARDILL, SMYTH AND ARMSTRONG WERE PRESENT. JAMES DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS "ENTIRELY PREDICTABLE". BUT IT HAD SERVED THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PURPOSE IN KEEPING PRESSURE ON THE UNIONISTS.

THE OUP HAD CONCENTRATED ON SECURITY ISSUES FOR MUCH OF THE TIME. WEST DID MOST OF THE TALKING AND HAD TAKEN A HARD LINE THROUGHOUT. HE HAD GONE OUT THE PREVIOUS FRIDAY TO CLOSE RANKS AGAINST MOLYNEAUX ON THE LINES THAT THE LATTER'S PROPOSALS SHOWED SIGNS OF UNACCEPTABLE WEAKENING. THE NIO VIEW IS, OF COURSE, THAT THE UNIONIST POSITION IS FAR LESS MONOLITHIC THAN WEST TRIED TO PRETEND.

MASON HAD SAID THAT A WILLINGNESS AMONG THE PARTIES TO GET TOGETHER FOR DISCUSSION WAS ESSENTIAL TO ANY DEVOLUTION ADVANCE. HE HAD PUT THAT ACROSS FIRMLY AND CLEARLY.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING WEST HAD SAID THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE GOING AWAY WITHOUT ANY SATISFACTION. HE HAD PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED AFTER THE MEETING THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD GIVEN HIM NEW ASSURANCES ON FOUR CARDINAL POINTS, INCLUDING NO POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE POLICE. BUT IN FACT ALL THESE POINTS WERE ONES WHICH MASON HAD MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS.

THROUGHOUT THE MEETING WEST HAD ATTACKED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ACROSS THE BOARD AS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL NORTHERN IRELAND'S PRESENT DIFFICULTIES AND HAD LAID PARTICULAR BLAME ON CALLAGHAN'S PERIOD AS HOME SECRETARY. HE HAD BITTERLY ATTACKED STV AS A MOVE TO DENY LOYALISTS THEIR LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATION. HE HAD MADE A GREAT DEAL OF PLAY OF WHAT HE CLAIMED TO BE CONTINUING DETESTATION AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL OF DIRECT RULE. THE NIO CLAIM TO SEE NO SIGN AT ALL OF THIS.

JANES SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO COMMITMENTS TO ANY FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS NOR, SO FAR AS HE WAS AWARE, WERE THERE ANY ARRANGEMENT FOR TALKS BETWEEN SDLP AND OFFICIAL UNIONISTS AT THE MOMENT. THE SECRETARY OF STATE WOULD PROBABLY BE MEETING WITH OTHER NORTHERN IRELAND PARTIES AT THEIR REQUEST.

WHEN I CAME BACK TO THE MOLYNEAUX PROPOSALS JANES SAID THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN ANY GREAT DETAIL AT EITHER MEETING. THE SDLP HAD TOLD MASON THAT THEY HAD FROM THE START LOOKED SOMEWHAT ASKANCE AT THE PROPOSALS. THE UNIONIST STATEMENT AFTER THE MEETING HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO PUT THE MOLYNEAUX IDEAS SQUARELY IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPROVEMENTS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES.

JANES THOUGHT THAT THE MOLYNEAUX IDEAS WOULD PROBABLY REST WHERE THEY ARE AT LEAST FOR SOME WEEKS. THE VALIDITY OF BRITISH RELUCTANCE RE POLITICAL INITIATIVES WITHOUT ANY ADEQUATE GROUND WORK HAD RECEIVED FURTHER CONFIRMATION FROM THE MOLYNEAUX EXPERIENCE WHICH SHOWED THAT UNLESS THE GROUND WAS PREPARED SUFFICIENTLY INITIATIVES ALWAYS RAN THE RISK OF AT ONCE CAUSING THE VARIOUS PARTIES TO DRAW BACK INTO THEIR SHELLS. OBVIOUSLY THERE IS INSTABILITY AT PRESENT WITHIN THE OUP AS THERE IS BETWEEN THE PARTIES OF THE UUUC AND WEST'S HARD LINE IS AS MUCH CONDITIONED BY HIS BACKWARD LOOKS AT PAISLEY AND ~~BRANK BARR~~ AS BY PRESSURES ON HIS LEADERSHIP WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY.

I QUERIES JANES FURTHER ON PR AND DIRECT ELECTIONS BUT HE WAS NOT FORTHCOMING BEYOND A SUGGESTION THAT THE SCOTCHING OF THE FLOATED SPEAKERS CONFERENCE ON REPRESENTATION IN THE DEVOLUTION CONTEXT MADE THE ISSUE OF PR FOR NORTHERN IRELAND IN EUROPEAN DIRECT ELECTIONS MORE DIFFICULT. IT DOES APPEAR THAT NIO AND FCO ADVICE AT OFFICIAL LEVEL TO THE HOME OFFICE, WHICH HAS IMMEDIATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A DIRECT ELECTIONS BILL, HAS BACKED PR FOR NI.

JANES REMARKED IN CONCLUSION THAT IN HIS VIEW THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION WAS IN MANY RESPECTS LESS CRITICAL THAN A YEAR AGO. TALKING ABOUT RECENT SDLP DEVELOPMENTS, HE AGAIN ATTRIBUTED IMPORTANCE TO WHAT HE CALLED A FAILURE OF COMMUNICATIONS LAST OCTOBER WHEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S LETTER TO FITT HAD APPARENTLY FAILED TO GO BEYOND ITS ADDRESSEE.

END

JC

10/2/77

TIME:::10.57

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