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Press Conference given by the Taoiseach following his and the
Minister's meeting of 28 September 1977 with the British Prime
Minister, Mr. Callaghan, the Secretary of State for Northern
Ireland, Mr. Mason, and the Minister of State at the FCO,
Mr. Frank Judd.

Taoiseach:

As you know, the purpose of my visit was to have a consultation and discussion with the British Prime Minister, Mr Callaghan. This was the first opportunity that I have had since I was elected Taoiseach to meet him because of ^{our} arrangements, which unfortunately couldn't bring us together sooner, we had to wait until now and I am glad to say that we had a very full discussion on ... not only on the North of Ireland but on most aspects that affect relations, economic and otherwise, between our two Governments. We spoke in relation to the EEC and on mutual problems in that respect, some bilateral problems, economic, but of course the main part of our discussions centred on the Northern Ireland situation. Before I came I was concerned that recent events gave some people at least the impression that there was a move towards integration, for example, by reason of the Northern Unionists voting with the British Government in certain divisions in the House of Commons, by reason of the establishment of the Speaker's Conference the purpose of which is to increase the representation of Northern Ireland members in Westminster. There was that feeling, then, that all these things might seem to point towards integration rather than devolved government and I was very happy to get the assurance from Mr Callaghan today that it was and remained the policy of the British Government to have devolved government with power-sharing and that there would be no devolved government without power-sharing. He was very emphatic in this respect.

We also discussed economic initiatives as between Ireland and the U.K. but, in particular, cross-border economic initiatives, and we agreed to establish a group to discuss and identify projects. That group will likely be at official level in the first instance and leading from there to ministerial meetings on this topic.

We discussed also our mutual interests in the EEC, the expansion of the EEC, that is the treatment of the applications of Greece, Portugal and Spain. We discussed also the direct elections in respect of which there is ... will be legislation before both parliaments when they resume after the summer recess and many other matters, for example, the Continental Shelf and things of that nature but, perhaps, I have said enough and you might like to ask specific questions on other aspects.

Q. During the election campaign your party were pretty critical of a lack of Government initiative, British Government initiative, to get a political settlement in Northern Ireland. Were you totally satisfied today about the British Government's efforts?

Taoiseach: I am No, not totally, one is never totally satisfied as a result of a discussion of comparatively short duration but I am satisfied that they are anxious to make a political initiative but they feel that this is not the time to do so. But I was satisfied that they were quite anxious and willing to make economic initiatives and these will be discussed in due time.

Q. Taoiseach, you have this long-term ^{commitment} to seek a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland. Was this mentioned today and did the awareness of it colour your talks in any way?

Taoiseach: I wouldn't say that the awareness of it would have coloured our talks, but I did refer to our long-term policy in relation to the Northern Ireland problem as it is called ^{that have} and I said that, in the interests of the people of Ireland and of Anglo-Irish relations, that there was a need to encourage the people of Ireland to come together by consent and under agreed structures. Mr Callaghan was well aware of my belief in the righteousness of that policy.

I mentioned it to him and well, naturally he accepted that that was the policy of my party.

Q. Without agreeing with it?

Taoiseach: Oh there was no agreement of course. I did not expect that he would agree there and then and I don't know whether ... to what extent he might agree in the future.

Q. Do I hear you right Mr Lynch? Did you say there that these meetings on North-South economic cooperation were at Ministerial level whereas the communiqué talks about officials of both Governments and, if that is so, do you see this as a recognition, as a justification of the SDLP's point-of-view which they put to you recently about a more obvious Irish dimension?

Taoiseach: I don't think the communiqué mentioned any form of meeting and it didn't mention at what level they might be but I said that as a matter of practice or of practicality that initially they would be at official level followed up inevitably, of course, by meetings at ministerial level and I mean this is something that, irrespective of any desire that the SDLP might have had, I advocated before the change of government in 1973.

Q. Could this be regarded as a sort of economic Council of Ireland?

Taoiseach: No, no, these will be specific projects identified as being of benefit to people on both sides of the border and perhaps, more particularly, to people in Border areas.

- Q. Mr Lynch, did you mention whether or not you would be renewing the State of Emergency in the Republic on October 16th?

Taoiseach: No, ^{the fact that} that didn't arise today. There was some reference to Section 2 of the Emergency Powers Act of 1976 will lapse unless it is renewed by ministerial order. I did say to the Prime Minister that we had been examining that particular Section, we had been examining the effects that it has had and that we probably would make our decision before the time for the lapsing of that Section would occur and that would have to be next week.

- Q. Is that the seven day interrogation?

Taoiseach: Yes, I am sorry, I should have explained that. Section 2 provides the extension of seven days of detaining people in custody without a charge made against them. I might say in that connection that we have not been happy about the manner in which it has been effective in bringing people to trial and because the judges in the Irish courts are now almost invariably not accepting statements made, statements or confessions by accused people who have been in custody for that length of time.

- Q. Do you have any comment to make on today's Amnesty International report that they have found consistent and sustained charges of maltreatment and they do connect it with the problems arising from the seven day clause in the Emergency Powers Act?

Taoiseach: Well, I am aware that the Amnesty report has made several complaints. They submitted that report to me and I passed it to the Minister for Justice who, in turn, asked for the comments of our Garda Síochána, our police, He has now received the comments of the Garda Síochána on that report and the Government will be examining it in the near future. Yes, there are connections

between this seven day detention period and some of the allegations contained in the Amnesty International report.

- Q. Have you found it disturbing? You took the British Government to ... eventually to the European Court of Human Rights over perhaps not as serious but similar allegations ...?

Taoiseach: Insofar as one can find allegations disturbing yes they were but, on the other hand, they remain to be proved and I don't know to what extent they will stand up to proof. They haven't been examined yet.

- Q. Taoiseach, did the Irish case before the European Court of Human Rights come up for discussion?

Taoiseach: No that wasn't mentioned at all today, because our attitude to that has been all along it was sub judice anyway and it was never more sub judice than it is now because we expect the judgment of the Court to be delivered in January of next year so we will have to await that.

- Q. Did you have an opportunity to discuss President Carter's proposals?

Taoiseach: Yes, we referred to it. We had both already expressed our satisfaction. Mr Callaghan had done it and I had done it through a Government Statement so we didn't think it necessary to discuss it further except of course that Mr Mason, I understand, is going to the United States to promote further industrial investment in the North of Ireland in the near future.

- Q. Did you raise at all the effectiveness of the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill with Mr Callaghan?

Taoiseach: No, that wasn't mentioned at all today ... for what reason I don't know. I didn't feel it my duty to bring it up because it is now in force for eighteen months and so far there has been no case taken under it. So it seems to be having no effect.

- Q. Did you come to any further agreement with the British Government about cross-border security and, if not, does your Government intend to take any further measures against the Provisional IRA in the Republic?

Taoiseach: I want to say that 100 per cent satisfaction was expressed by the British Government and in particular by Mr Roy Mason in relation to the degree of cooperation that they have been getting from the Irish Government on security matters and we have agreed that insofar as it is necessary to have further measures on future cooperation that we are willing to discuss it with them and there was no doubt whatever about the degree of cooperation that we are giving to the security forces north and south of the border in this respect.

- Q. Does your Government intend to introduce any new initiatives against the Provisional IRA in the Republic, particularly after the recent killing in Dublin?

Taoiseach: I think possibly the measures we have on our statute books are sufficient to deal with any cases in which sufficient evidence is available.

- Q. You talk of power sharing still Mr Lynch. Would it not be your view that, with Unionist intransigence on the one hand, and the SDLP's apparent change-of-course on the other, that we are further away from this ideal that you speak of than ever?

Taoiseach: Well, I wouldn't like to say that we are further away from the aspirations that I hold but I certainly know it is not going to be easily attained or within a short period but the fact is that a devolved form of Government with power sharing is the only devolved form of Government which is available to the North of Ireland and obviously somebody will have to overcome intransigence in order to bring this about if they are going to come to any form of devolution in the North of Ireland. I was glad to note ...

- Q. Is that Mr Callaghan's answer to the SDLP who have asked the British Government to declare their long-term intention? Do you think that that is as far as Mr Callaghan is going to go on such a declaration?

Taoiseach: Well, I wasn't holding a brief for the SDLP today, I was discussing what was on our table and I was satisfied with the statement about devolved Government and power sharing.

- Q. Does the communiqué mean that you are giving quite strong support to some form of interim devolution within Northern Ireland, some super-county council or something of that sort?

Taoiseach: No, I wouldn't say that. If you read the communiqué again you will see that this is a unilateral statement by Mr Mason that if, in the meantime, there is a general desire, the British Government would be ready to devolve a range of powers to a locally-elected body under arrangements acceptable to both sides of the community. Now this

isn't ... as far as I understand it ... this is not an initiative to replace a local authority as we know like a local county council or an urban council. As I understood Mr Mason today, his intention is to see to what extent that executive functions now carried out by non-elected bodies in the field of health, education and housing might be replaced by bodies elected on a power sharing basis and he intends to start negotiations about this and, I think that this is a very practical move, step forward ~~in~~ the direction of power sharing.

Q. Except of course there doesn't seem to be any great support from any of the major parties for it ...!

Taoiseach: Well, of course, Mr Mason seems to have a lot of patience. He is anxious to try and try again and obviously this is one initiative that he is going to try out.

Q. Did you at all discuss the problems of British Army encroachments into Irish territory?

Taoiseach: No, that didn't come up at all. We had general discussions about flyovers and things like that but I don't think that the incursions are serious at this point in time anyway. If there are incursions we take them up as they occur and look for and often ... invariably get reasonable assurances about them.

Q.. Bhfuil an dul chun cinn déanta de bharr cainteanna an lae inniu, dar leat?

Taoiseach Tá mé cinnte go bhfuil an-dul chun cinn déanta. Fé mar is eol duit, mar a dúirt me i dtosach, ~~bhí~~ an príomh-chruinniú, an príomh teacht le chéile a bhí agam le Jim Callaghan agus ba mhór liom an ráiteas - an ath-ráiteas - faoi devolved government. Agus tá dul chun cinn déanta freisin i gkursai eachnamaíochta.

Q. Did you raise any aspects of security policy in the North of Ireland, for example, did you express any of the minority worries about membership of the UDR and did you ask about technical screening procedures?

oipseach: I did yes. The short answer is yes I did.

Q. Were you happy with the response?

oipseach: Yes I think Mr Mason was conscious of the fact that there have been convictions for very serious crimes against members of the UDR, that there have been statements by members of the North of Ireland judiciary commenting on the apparent loose screening there is of people entering the UDR. I mentioned that. I brought that to his attention.

Q. What is your impression after these talks of the Northern situation?

oipseach: My impression after these talks is that the British Government and the Irish Government are in full agreement about securing a peaceful situation in the North of Ireland, securing a form of devolved government that will be acceptable to both communities in the North of Ireland and I am satisfied as well that the arrangements we have in relation to security between both Governments will continue. And over and above that, of course, I am satisfied that relations between the two Governments in matters of wider interest are on a very good and strong basis.

Q. Did you talk about any special protection of the minority in this power-sharing?

oipseach: Yes and it's implicit if not exact... stated in the communiqué because it does in fact say all sections of the community could participate on a fair basis in which the rights of all citizens are fully safeguarded. This is stated in the communiqué.

Q. Is there anything in the fact that the communiqué does not

oiseach: No. I have stated very specifically what was said to me that there cannot be devolved government without power-sharing and without power-sharing there can be no devolved government. These were very specific statements made to me and I am putting them on record now.

Q. But it's not mentioned in the communique?

oiseach: Well.....

Q. Would it be your view Mr Lynch then that after all that you have said today that there is no truth in the speculation that the British Government, perhaps over the course of the next six months, might examine the rejected Convention Report and possibly see whether there is anything in that that might find agreement on the way forward?

oiseach: In the light of the emphasis put on power-sharing... in the words I have just used ... I did not seek any assurance about devolution on the basis of the Convention Report. It didn't seem to me to be necessary. I have been given these very positive assurances about devolution and power-sharing which I think I can accept.

Q. Given the long-term attempts to get power-sharing what is your own personal view of the possibility of some kind of power-sharing executive being arrived at in Northern Ireland?

oiseach: I believe that ultimately it will be borne in on those people who are intransigent in relation to devolved power-sharing along the lines decided by the Westminster Parliament and which is common policy between all the parties in the British Government. That the reality of this must be brought to bear on those who are intransigent and ultimately it will. It may not be in the short term but ultimately it must.

- Q. Will you be coming again to Mr Callaghan to ask him for firm political moves in order to bring about a power-sharing government?

Taoiseach: We have arranged that the meeting today is one of a number of meetings. How soon the next will take place I don't know but I will, of course, be putting forward proposals to Mr Callaghan, either specific ones or long-term ones as it seems to me to be appropriate.

- Q. What about Mrs. Thatcher, Mr. Lynch? What will you say to her?

Taoiseach : I haven't met the lady yet... I hope to meet her tomorrow... in fact I will be meeting her tomorrow and I look forward very much to explaining my views to her and hearing her views on not only the North of Ireland but on the general relations between the UK and Ireland.

- Q. It seems to some observers that the Conservative Party's commitment to power-sharing is pretty tenuous. Will you be seeking from her assurances about its place in Tory policy?

Taoiseach: Well I have no reason to believe that what you say is true. I am not denying that you have an opinion about it which you are entitled to have about the tenuous nature of the Conservatives' commitment to power-sharing, but I hope it isn't only a tenuous commitment. I believe it is a commitment to power-sharing and I haven't heard anything specific to the contrary.

- Q. Asked whether the matter of the enlargement of the Community had been discussed.

Taoiseach: Yes, we spoke about the applications of Greece, Portugal and Spain. We spoke about these applications in the

countries who have the will and the economic capacity to join should be members of the Community. We felt as well that politically it would be a good thing for the Community and for the countries themselves in order to stabilize their democratic institutions that they should join at the earliest possible moment though we didn't deny that there were practical difficulties at the present time, because it took us, for example, ten years from the date of our application before we got in. Notwithstanding the fact that, of course, I must admit there was a French veto on the British and Irish applications at that time from the early 'sixties, but there will be long negotiations between these three countries. Of course, already Greece is an associate member and her application is probably much further advanced than that of the others. In fact I think Spain formally applied only quite recently, a few days ago. But we did certainly express the desirability of these three countries being members of the Community.

- Q. Mr Lynch, could you explain in more detail why you didn't press the October 29th 1975 Fianna Fail policy statement about withdrawal today and whether you do intend to press it at some future date?

Taoiseach: I have explained already that this is my first meeting with Mr Callaghan since I was elected Taoiseach and I came to a large extent to find out the up-to-date position. After all I have been away from this scene at first hand for four and a half years and I felt that it was important that I should establish in ...as... at the outset ... or re-establish in my own mind the British commitment to power-sharing and to re-invigorate the necessity for economic cooperation especially along the border. I felt that was a ... progress and one can't achieve all one's objectives in a meeting, a one-day meeting.

- Q. You say you welcome their commitment to devolved government in the North. Is this just words or will you be expecting to see some concrete action resulting along these lines?

Taoiseach: Well, it's a slow process as the previous questioner has said ... when do you expect something to happen? ... but, at least, we see in what Mr Mason said or rather in that part of the communique which referred to devolution in executive functions locally that there is a practical start anyway and I believe that he is going to start these negotiations with the political parties next week or the week after.

Q. Mr Lynch, during the talks today how much were you actually swayed by what the SDLP have said/during your recent meeting with them?

Taoiseach: I wasn't swayed at all by the SDLP and when the SDLP came to me recently I told them that I was making my own case in London but naturally I would have regard for what they had to say but that in no sense was I holding their brief.

Q. Are there any plans for Mr O'Kennedy to meet Mr Frank Judd in the near future?

Taoiseach: Pardon?

Q. (repeated)

Taoiseach: Yes there are, there are. In fact they have been meeting every month now because Mr Judd goes to the Council of Ministers in Brussels and they will be meeting in the context, of course, of the economic proposals or whatever will emerge from economic proposals at official level. Michael O'Kennedy reminds me that he is meeting David Owen on 2 November which is quite close.

Q. All the time you have emphasized a solution acceptable to both communities but the history of this struggle shows that these communities/ can't agree on anything. Isn't that a pity? or do you think that something should be imposed?

Taoiseach: I don't.... Well, we have intractable problems all over the world. I