

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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Note

The Minister received a telephone call on 23 August (16.35) from Mr. H. Atkins, who informed the Minister that he would not be accepting Governor Carey's invitation to talks in New York. In the British Government's view the terms of the Governor's letter of invitation, and the fact that the invitation had been rendered public at a premature stage, doomed the initiative to failure. His authorities could not see realistically what could come out of the proposed meeting. Observing in particular the press speculation about the initiative, they were not encouraged to see that it would have any value. He was therefore replying negatively by letter to Governor Carey and the letter would be in the latter's hands before long.

The Minister said that we had indicated, through our Ambassador in Washington, a generally favourable response, and had indicated we wished to give the matter some further consideration before giving a final reply. Mr. Atkins would understand that we would have to look favourably at an initiative from those quarters in the U.S.A. which had shown their positive and constructive approach to Irish affairs, and we believed that this approach, so evident in the case of the leading American politicians who are our friends, stood in sharp contrast to that of the Irish National Caucus, the Biaggi ad hoc Committee, etc. In fact we had a letter in draft accepting the Governor's invitation and were on the point of dispatching it when we had heard through the British Embassy of Mr. Atkins's démarche.

The Minister enquired whether the negative British reaction was only to this particular meeting or whether it was intended to apply also to other meetings of different format or in a different place. Mr. Atkins said it related just to next month's proposed meeting. The Minister observed that he would be in New York next month anyway.

Concerning the Carey proposal and the British reaction, the Minister said he accepted that he and Mr. Atkins had different

rôles and could not see the same way forward even to those goals th  
they had in common. He described our view of the U.S.  
constituency and indicated that, in regard to direct British  
criticism of the Irish-American extremist groups, it would be  
counterproductive, and we could not be seen to join in any such  
counterproductive action.

Mr. Atkins said he looked forward to seeing the Minister soon.  
The Minister said that following the British refusal of the Carey  
invitation he would have to consider the timing of their next  
get-together in that light. The Minister would now have to be  
careful lest the public would see an early bilateral meeting as  
a substitution for the New York one. Mr. Atkins accepted this  
point.



D. M. Neligan

24 August, 1979