

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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# ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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To: SECRET

From: Northern Ireland Review Meeting, July, 1982

1. This meeting which was held in Government Buildings on Thursday, 29 July, 1982 was convened for the purpose of a general review of the Northern Ireland situation in the context of Anglo-Irish relations. A list of those present is annexed (Annex 1).

2. The meeting considered the Northern Ireland situation under the usual headings. The Taoiseach in winding up the discussion drew the following conclusions:-

(i) Summit or Ministerial Meetings

Until there was an improvement in the present climate there appeared to be no possibility of a productive Summit Meeting taking place. Accordingly we should make no move to seek a meeting at this stage although we would not necessarily respond negatively to any British approach for a political level meeting

(ii) Approach to Anglo-Irish Relations

Our approach to Anglo-Irish relations should be neutral. We should not seek meetings and risk a refusal. On the other hand, we should respond positively if suggestions for meetings or contacts emanated from the British.

(iii) Prior Initiative

The Government would continue their total opposition to the Prior proposals.

(iv) Parliamentary Tier

The Government should hold over any action in regard to

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establishment of the tier in view of the inadequacy in the manner of establishment and in regard to functions of the type of Parliamentary Tier envisaged by the Northern Ireland Secretary of State and Lord Gowrie as evidenced from their recent statements.

(v) Voting Rights

Action on this matter should not be taken further at this stage.

(vi) Northern Ireland and the US

We should continue to promote our efforts to obtain the support of Irish-Americans for Government policy on Northern Ireland. As regards the Falklands factor the message which should be got across widely in the US was that if Anglo-Irish relations were in a bad state it was simply because the Irish Government had taken an independent line on the Falklands issue and the British had apparently decided that we should be "punished" for exercising our right to determine our own policy in this respect. The Irish position in relation to Anglo-Irish consultation about Northern Ireland should be got across with full emphasis.

(vii) Anglo-Irish Encounter Organisation

No further action should be taken on this matter for the present.

(viii) Meetings with British Ministers

All proposals for meetings with British Ministers should be cleared with the Taoiseach in advance. At official level routine or technical meetings could continue but any suggestion



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for a further meeting between officials of the Offices of the two Attorney Generals should be submitted to the Taoiseach.

(ix) British Demarche

Having regard to the conversation which took place on 26 July in the Foreign Office in London between Mr. Douglas Hurd, M.P. Minister of State and Ambassador Kennedy, and in particular to Mr. Hurd's statement that the British authorities do not consider they were obliged to consult with the Irish Government on the future of Northern Ireland, it was desirable that clarification of the British Government's position, in the light of the December, 1980 communique and the Joint Memorandum on the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council, should be sought immediately. For this purpose the Minister for Foreign Affairs should ask the British Ambassador to call on him later that day. [A copy of the Aide-Memoire which was given to the British Ambassador on the evening of the 29th July is annexed to this report (Annex 2)].

18 August 1982

ANNEX 1

Northern Ireland Review Meeting

Thursday, 29 July, 1982

List of Participants

Taoiseach

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Justice

Secretary to the Government

Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs

Mr. P. O hAnn.rachain, Second Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach

Ambassador E. Kennedy

Ambassador T. O'Sullivan

Mr. D. Neligan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs

Mr. W. Kirwan, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach

Dr. M. Mansergh, Special Adviser on Northern Ireland Affairs

Mr. F. Murray, Department of the Taoiseach

Mr. J. Kirby, Department of Justice

Mr. M. Burke, Department of Foreign Affairs

Ms Margaret Hennessy, Department of Foreign Affairs

Note

Mr. T. J. Ainsworth, Assistant Garda Commissioner was also present for part of the meeting.



Handed by Minister to Ambassador Figg (5.00 pm  
29 July)

Aide-Memoire

ANNEX 2

Having regard to the conversation which took place on 26 July in the Foreign Office in London between Mr. Douglas Hurd, Minister of State, and the Irish Ambassador to Britain, and in particular to Mr. Hurd's statement that the British authorities did not consider that they were obliged to consult with the Irish Government on the future of Northern Ireland, it is desired to ask the following questions:-

6 Do the British Government accept the conclusions of the Dublin Castle meeting of 8 December, 1980, between Prime Minister Thatcher and the Taoiseach?

(It will be recalled that paragraphs 4 and 5 of the agreed communique of that meeting read as follows:-

4. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister agreed that the economic, social and political interests of the peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic are inextricably linked, but that the full development of these links has been put under strain by division and dissent in Northern Ireland. In that context, they accepted the need to bring forward policies and proposals to achieve peace, reconciliation and stability; and to improve relations between the peoples of the two countries.

5. They considered that the best prospect of attaining these objectives was the further development of the unique relationship between the two countries.)

- Do the British Government accept the Joint Memorandum on the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council, agreed at the First Ministerial meeting of the Council on 29 January, 1982?

(Paragraph 2 of the Joint Memorandum reads as follows:-

2. It will be a basic purpose of the Council to contribute to the achievement of peace, reconciliation and stability and to the improvement of relations between the peoples of the two countries. Within the framework of the Council there will be the closest bilateral consultation at Ministerial



or official level, as appropriate, on matters relating to these purposes and on matters of common interest or concern.)

- In the event of a positive reply to those questions, how do the British Government reconcile the formal agreements cited above with Minister of State Hurd's statement to Ambassador Kennedy on 26 July?

The Government of Ireland for its part fully accept the conclusions agreed at the Head of Government meetings of 1980 and 1981. We confirm our agreement to the Joint Memorandum on the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and we look forward to implementing all its provisions.

In this connection, attention is drawn to paragraph 21 of the British Government's White Paper of July 1980, which satisfactorily expresses the basic considerations underlying the need for the closest consultation between our Governments:

" 21. In the words of the communique issued after the meeting on 21 May between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, there is a unique relationship between the peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and a need to further this relationship in the interests of peace and reconciliation. We share bonds of history, culture and language; there is a mutual economic and trading interest, enhanced by our common membership of the European Community; and there is a close geographical inter-relationship, recognised in the existence of a common travel area and illustrated by many centuries of the movement of people and of trade across the Irish Sea. The ties between us are close. And with those ties comes a mutuality of interest. Each territory is inescapably affected by events and developments in the other. "