

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code: 2014/105/825

Creation Date(s): [July 1984]

Extent and medium: 3 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

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SPEAKING NOTE

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1. The ideas which you put to us on 16th July are still being considered by Ministers in Dublin. The issues for us, as for you, require a major political commitment. We know you share our view of the need to "get it right".

2. We can however already give you a preliminary reaction to what you have now put to us. Frankly we see reason for serious concern on two main points where your approach seems to us to be seriously inadequate by the criteria of tackling effectively minority alienation, and securing a durable outcome that would not contain what unionists could see as a threat of "creeping" unification; even at this stage, we want to put these concerns to you.

3. One major concern is about the security issue which is absolutely central to any settlement. We need clarification of your thinking on certain aspects of this. But to speak candidly, we consider that your general ideas, as we now understand them, would be dangerously gradualist, risking rejection in the early stages by the minority and simultaneous rejection by the majority because of fears of where they might lead.

4. A second major concern is what we believe to be the inadequacy of the political framework which you are prepared to envisage both in terms of its actual adequacy as an actual political control mechanism for the security arrangements, and as a perceived response to the need to give the minority the necessary sense of being equally identified with the system of political authority. Here too we want to understand better exactly what you have in mind. But our present view of the ideas which you put to us on 16th July is that they fall far short of what the situation requires and would accordingly fail to provide a basis for the kind of action required in the South in order to give unionists a sense of security vis a vis what they perceive as a challenge or threat to a claim on sovereignty.

5. In simple terms in order to provide the political counterpart necessary to us to face a constitutional referendum the package of new arrangements for the Government of Northern Ireland would have to provide substantial authority - and be seen to do so - to an Irish Government. Frankly on reflection we got what seems to be mixed signals on this point on 16th July. It is important that you understand how fundamental our requirement is in this area; and it is important that we understand what your ideas would comprise in theory, in their legal character, and in practice. To enable Ministers in Dublin to give their substantive reaction to what you have now proposed, we would hope to develop our understanding of what exactly you have in mind and to explain to you our very serious concerns on both points I have mentioned.

Security

6. The security issue, in our view is central. It cannot be left aside in the hope of gradual improvement as the political aspects of a settlement take effect. It is vital to get it right from the outset AS PART OF THE PACKAGE - or otherwise the best-intentioned efforts we make in other fields will fail.

7. The present security system in Northern Ireland is seen by the Unionists as THEIR system and their defence; and an attack on any of the three elements of that system - the British Army, the UDR or the RUC - is felt as an attack on THEIR community - as indeed, in an important sense, it is.

8. The minority on the other hand, feel that the security structure is not in any sense THEIRS. Indeed as they encounter it in their daily living, it comes across in the strict sense as "alien". The forces they encounter - particularly at times of political tension - are heavily armed, and (necessarily) adopt a defensive posture as they operate on the ground and from heavily armed transport vehicles.

9. All of this quite understandable in present circumstances; and the good intention of the authorities to provide security to all through these structures is not questioned.

10. The policy of gradual "Ulsterisation" following the crisis of the earlier years has reinforced this effect intensifying alienation, however little this may have been intended. From the viewpoint of the minority it has been seen as placing security seen by many even of those who are not sympathetic to the IRA as "instruments of coercion", in the hands of the other community. In these circumstances, "security" inevitably, and now to an increasing extent, becomes seen as a kind of coercion, rather than as a fundamental requirement in which there is a common interest transcending community differences. It is effectively and thoroughly tribalised security/

11. If we are to make progress within what is possible to both Governments it is essential that we be ready to take a very radical view of this problem.

12. At the height of our own civil war in 1922, the emerging Irish Government found the courage to establish an un-armed police force in our State. This was audacious and imaginative. Indeed it could be described as one of our boldest Government decisions taken in the history of the State. It worked.

13. Equally bold action is required to bring stability now in Northern Ireland. It would be our intention to develop a framework and environment within which this would be possible.

14. How could this be done? Two things are clear

- (i) in Unionists/Protestant areas there is no problem with the existing security forces. It can be argued that they do not need to be armed in these areas.
- (ii) on the other the most serious difficulties arise with the present security forces in nationalist areas. It is necessary therefore in our view to establish a new, additional, nationalist-based force which could be unarmed. These two assumed forces could perhaps be backed by a new joint third "security force" (or alternatively new locally dispersed community forces, to be added to the present security structure). These forces would be under the aegis of a joint security commission which would itself be subsidiary to, and within, the joint framework. Training and supervision would be supervised by both sides.

15. Inevitably there would be a transitional period before such new force or forces could be put in place. To deal with this we see no option but to provide for joint security operations at least for a limited period.