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CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND
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April 28, 1993

Mr. Gerry Corr,
Anglo Irish Division,
Department of Foreign Affairs.

PA (1) Boston file
(2) under 67
Taoiseach to
US Aerial
1993

Re: Taoiseach's Meeting with Cardinal Law

During his visit to Boston, the Taoiseach met with Cardinal Law at the latter's residence in Brighton on 20 April. The central portion of the meeting was devoted to Northern Ireland.

The Taoiseach outlined the Government's policy saying that we were committed to the search for a solution which both communities would accept. He said that the overwhelming number of the population, both North and South, and in both communities in the North were anxious that a solution be found. However, some Unionist leaders - like the Reverend Ian Paisley - were not prepared to enter negotiations without preconditions which effectively prevent the talks from restarting. The Taoiseach explained that the Local Government elections in May and the forthcoming marching season would be a barrier to Unionists entering negotiations at present. He saw the fall as the earliest timeframe for a recommencement of the talks.

However, the Taoiseach said that, despite the horrendous violence which has occurred both from the IRA and the Loyalist paramilitaries, there are signs that peace may be achievable. He felt that it was necessary to work for peace in order to get a workable political solution.

The Cardinal told the Taoiseach that he was having a meeting with the Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Sir Patrick Mayhew, during the latter's visit to Boston on May 6 - 7. He would be interested to discover what plans, if any, the British Government had for political progress in Northern Ireland. Asked about the new proposals hinted at by the Secretary of State, the Taoiseach said he was concerned that what could be on offer was merely an internal settlement. The Taoiseach expressed grave doubt about the wisdom of such an approach. He added that this type of arrangement had been tried in the past and had failed; it would only please the Unionists and would be unacceptable to the Nationalists. On the other hand, the Taoiseach went on to say that he was happy with the public statement made by the British Prime Minister (after the Mayhew interview) to the effect that the matter would be one for negotiation between the two Governments and by the political parties in Northern Ireland and that Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution could be considered in the context of a viable final package.

The Taoiseach thanked the Cardinal for his concern on Northern Ireland and especially his helpful statements on confidence issues and on fair employment. These issues, he told the Cardinal, were vitally important and we were continuing to press the British Government to have them addressed and corrected within the Inter-Governmental Conference established under the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The Cardinal spoke of his friendship with Cardinal Daly and he said they were in constant contact. He said that Cardinal Daly was very courageous during the recent four Church Leaders trip to the USA. While Cardinal Law also praised the Presbyterian Moderator, Dr. Morrow, he felt that Archbishop Eames was not as generous in the search for reconciliation as is Cardinal Daly and, to a lesser extent, the other Church Leaders.

On the Special Envoy question, the Cardinal said he was not keen on this proposed formula for U.S. involvement. He would prefer a Special U.S. Commission to inquire into the problem and report back to the President. The Taoiseach said that he had been very pleased with President Clinton's concern and willingness to help when they met on St. Patrick's Day in Washington. They had agreed to do nothing about the Special Envoy for the time being until it was clear what would happen after the Local Government Elections and the marching season in the North.

Cardinal Law concurred with the strategy but advised that it was better to get the President to put something in place while one still had his attention on the subject. Placing the matter on the long finger would allow the President to move on to (for him) more pressing issues and the moment might be lost. The Cardinal felt that an Envoy would be the wrong vehicle to use as, apart from the objections it would elicit from the Unionists and London, it would have a very finite role and would end at a certain point, whether the Envoy was successful or not (the latter being the most likely scenario). On the other hand, the Special Commission would be broad and less controversial, would have direct access to the President (depending on its terms of reference and composition) and would be open ended. Moreover, it could be put in place now while the matter is fresh in the President's mind.

Finally, the Taoiseach thanked the Cardinal for his generous assistance to the new Irish immigrants - particularly, through his support for the Irish Pastoral Center.

Adrian O'Neill

h.h.
Liam Canniffe
Consul General

c/c Ambassador, Washington