



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
**National Archives**

**Reference Code:** 2021/47/83

**Creator(s):** Department of Foreign Affairs

**Accession Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland.  
May only be reproduced with  
the written permission of the  
Director of the National  
Archives.

16 July, 1993

Confidential

Mr. Sean O hUiginn  
Assistant Secretary  
Anglo-Irish Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
Dublin 2.

cc M. Kelleher  
M. Callen  
M. Grant  
cc 21/7/93  
PST  
PSS  
M. F. Murray  
Ms T. Dalton  
Councillor A  
Box  
19/

Dear Assistant Secretary

Follow-up to Conference

We had a number of exchanges this week about the follow-up to last Thursday's Conference.

Date of Next Conference

The reason for the Secretary of State's hesitation about a Conference in early September was, we are told, that Minister Wheeler will be on leave until the 13th. We explained the difficulties faced by the Tánaiste. The British side are seeing if they can bring the date forward (otherwise the Conference may be delayed until October which would be unfortunate presentationally apart from anything else).

The British say they are not "hassling" us for a further meeting of the Liaison Group but repeat that they would be happy to have one in early August when Quentin Thomas has returned from a couple of weeks leave. He thinks a meeting could usefully address the issue of constitutional balance.

Political matters

We arranged for the Tánaiste's speech in the Seanad on Tuesday to be faxed to the Secretary of State in London (officials here enjoyed both the 12th and 13th as public holidays). The British side had no comment. We regretted what we thought was an over-reaction on their side to the Tánaiste's Guardian article, pointing out that the core of it, namely, the observation that the two Governments had a responsibility to give a lead if the parties did not come back to the table, was a point we had made repeatedly, and publicly in the Tánaiste's speech of 30 June to the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary session in Cork. They had themselves praised that speech at the last meeting of the Liaison Group. At that meeting, they had also suggested that some form of joint declaration by the Governments setting out elements of agreement between us might be issued in coming months in order to stimulate a resumption

of talks (it is likely, however, that the British have a restrictive view of what that declaration might contain).

We thought that the British briefing which provided a spate of stories in the press last Friday and over the weekend about British anger and a rift between Dublin and London had not been helpful, to use a phrase beloved of the British themselves. It had certainly not been helpful to the aim of getting the parties back around the table. For that purpose, it was vital not to leave them with the idea that they could veto not only any outcome of the 26 March 1991 process (nothing agreed until everything agreed) but any initiative by the two Governments to break the logjam.

We noted in passing that the article in the Guardian had been written by John Palmer, the doyen of EC journalists in Brussels, and that it had not been intended as an Anglo-Irish piece; moreover, that the headline about by-passing the parties had been provided by the Guardian not the Tánaiste. (Incidentally, the British side here seemed to know nothing of Palmer's background, a point which some of us also discovered in conversation with other British officials at the Conference.)

The British side replied that the fact remained that the interview had caused major reverberations. It was not true to say that their own reaction had contributed to this; they had merely engaged in damage limitation. There would have been no point trying to conceal the disagreement between the two Governments which was not in itself an unhealthy thing.

#### Private Comment

Privately, the British Deputy Joint Secretary described the Secretary of State as tetchy with everyone including his civil servants. He was uncertain what to do next, jittery about the mood in the Unionist community, worried especially about loyalist attacks on the police, and anxious not to burden his already overwhelmed Prime Minister with a deteriorating political and security situation in Northern Ireland. Therein lay the reason for the strength of his reaction to the Guardian article. Generally, I think the Secretary of State has undoubtedly been tilting towards the Unionists since his Coleraine speech last December. His views have been affected by the reaction to that speech and by the Unionist alienation argument which has developed in the meantime, in particular the complaint about Britain's "neutral" role. We have not been hearing of neutrality or facilitation recently; on the contrary, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State have been going out of their way to support the Union. The immediate desirability of Unionist votes in the Commons may well be a reason for this tack, but I think it represents a deeper, changed view of what is now required.

### The Ancram contacts

We were told that the initial contacts which Minister Ancram reported at the Conference were of the getting-to-know-you variety. He has met only Hume and Molyneaux, not Paisley or Alderdice. He hoped to have a further round of conversations shortly (Comment: it is of interest that Minister Ancram has not been able to meet Paisley even on a getting-to-know-you basis.)

### The Twelfth Parades

It seemed from contacts here throughout the weekend that the parades went reasonably well which the British confirmed. We raised the decision of the police to allow a Belfast feeder parade from Highfield to march up Springfield Road and Ainsworth Avenue and return the same route. This was the route not permitted on 26 June which led to loyalist disturbances. We said the RUC's decision had undone some of the positive impact on Nationalists of the earlier decision.

We also raised an incident shown on TV in which a policeman appeared to enter a house in the Ballygawley estate in Dungannon to remove a single tricolour from an upstairs window. We asked why this had been necessary. Had the police urged marchers not to carry Union Jacks? We were told the police had taken this action to avoid a riot. We asked if in that case the march should have been permitted along that route at all, as we had queried beforehand. The essence of the British view was that the police were dealing with a fraught mood in the Unionist community and a serious escalation of loyalist attacks on themselves. Even so, taking the parades as a whole, the police had made further advances this year, notably on Springfield Road and in the Lower Ormeau for the mini-Twelfth parades. We accepted this general point.

We regretted that for the first time in a number of years we had not been given the RUC book of parades. We had maintained the information in the annual books in full confidence and it had enabled us to better appreciate the RUC's approach. The British privately regretted the decision which they said had been made by the Secretary of State personally because of Unionist claims of Maryfield interference and police susceptibilities. (Comment: in previous years the RUC book was given to us by officials without the knowledge of the RUC which they ask us to continue to bear in mind.)

Lastly, we drew attention to the editorial in Tuesday's News Letter which says "there is surely nothing to be gained by marching in areas where the overwhelming majority of people feel offended by their (Orangemen's) presence". This is the position we have taken for years past and which indeed Tom King and Douglas Hurd took in their periods as Secretary of State. We regretted that British Ministers since then had not



repeated that view and we urged them to take a leaf out of the News Letter's book.

#### Carlingford Lough

We said that the candid remarks of the Secretary of State that there was random stopping and searching on the Lough for the purpose of deterrence represented a new development. It was quite contrary to the assurances we had received in the early days of such patrolling (1972). Nor had it been mentioned in the recent revised note passed over by the British which had spoken of a requirement that vessels not be interfered with by patrols "unless suspicions are alerted" although this is covered by the rider "consistent with the overriding need to perform their task effectively". We knew that current legislation did permit random stopping, ie, stopping without suspicion, which was why we had asked for an assurance that it was not permitted in practice. We were concerned that random stopping on the Lough would cause incidents. John Ledlie's comparison of the random stopping of vessels under sail or motor in the disputed waters of Lough Carlingford with the random stopping of motorists at PVCs was unreal. The Secretary of State's comparison with random stopping for the purpose of detecting drink drivers was even more so (British officials were taken aback by the Secretary of State's remark; they said such random stopping is illegal notwithstanding Sir Patrick's assurances). We would need to reflect on the Secretary of State's remarks.

The British side said the Secretary of State's reference to persons of interest to the security forces being on board the Flying Fish was intended to mean Mr Johnny Morgan. (Comment: We understand he is a brother of the Sinn Fein member, Arthur Morgan, but from enquiries on a previous occasion we are not aware that he is involved in any way in subversive activity. This may be a case where a person is made to suffer for a relationship with a member of Sinn Fein. We would be grateful to have an up-to-date Garda view.)

#### Public Appointments

We brought up Mr Atkins' comment that some of our nominations for appointment were inappropriate and that, for example, on one occasion we had nominated a man where a woman was required. The British side said their officials had no idea what case the Minister had been referring to. We thought he might have been thinking of a case in 1991 when the Minister for Education, Lord Belstead, rejected our nomination of Michael Lavery QC to the Board of the Ulster Museum. He also rejected two other male candidates put up by officials on the grounds that a better balance of the sexes was required on the Board. He eventually appointed a woman whom we had previously nominated unsuccessfully to the Fair Employment Commission.

If this was the case in Mr Atkins' mind, it had not been well chosen. Not only had we not been told in advance that a woman

nominee was required; we had not been told of the Minister's views when he did express them, or given any opportunity, therefore, to make a further nomination; in fact, we had been told nothing at all until October 1991 when we had made enquiries. At that point, we had been told of the successful candidate and that her appointment had been made some months previously; we had also belatedly received an information note on the Board which would have been useful to have at the time we were making the nomination. The whole affair had prompted us to ask for more timely and better information about vacancies and to ask also that if a new element came into play at the moment of Ministerial decision, whether for political reasons or otherwise, we should be informed and given an opportunity to make further representations. The last point had arisen at a very recent Conference on 3 February 1993 when the Secretary of State had given a favourable response.

Comment: We have ensured that Mr Atkins is aware of the history of this case. We have had previous experience of inaccurate comment by Ministers on public appointments which may be done for spoiling purposes on an issue which is embarrassing for the British side. Or it may be that officials have misled Ministers in order to avoid an Irish appointment. In this case, the officials concerned deny briefing Mr Atkins to make his remarks (they would, wouldn't they?!).

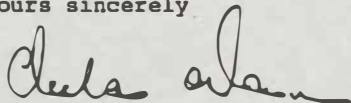
#### Particular cases

We noted that the Tánaiste raised the case of the Gallen sisters living on the Cavan/Fermanagh border and pressed to know what had been done to relieve the difficulties they had been experiencing due to a checkpoint. The British side said they would come back but mentioned that the security forces had recently been around to see the ladies armed with a bouquet of flowers! We also mentioned the complaints made by the Loughran family through Seamus Mallon who has been denouncing all and sundry for the lack of response. The British repeated that it was impossible to give an answer until the RUC finished their investigation. We hoped that the investigation which has been going on for some time will be completed speedily.

#### Broadcasting

It would be important to ensure that the technical exchanges contemplated at the first group meeting in London should be completed in time to permit a second meeting in very early September to help prepare for the Conference discussion.

Yours sincerely



Declan O'Donovan  
Joint Secretary