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# ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Ui mhir.....

SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION  
SECRET AND PERSONAL

Meeting between the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister,  
in Downing Street, 16 June, 1993.

## Discussion at Dinner

### Note:

This record is in the form of direct speech but does not purport to be a transcript of the discussion.

### Secretary of State:

The objective set out in the March 1991 statement is still attainable. This was to find a way to reduce antagonisms, to find a way forward, to which there would be a general agreement within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between East and West. When the talks had finished, Sir Ninian Stephen said that this objective was still valid and that further dialogue was desirable. That is the "theology" of the talks. I believe the Judge was right then. The question now is whether after 7 months, the Judge is still right. I'm sure we should hold to the three Strand format: nothing to be agreed until everything was agreed etc.

The Unionists have reflected on their experiences of the process and in particular on the local election results. Dr. Paisley had not been rebuked as many had thought, myself included. The Ulster Unionists had thought likewise. It was difficult to interpret the results in one sense. The DUP had lost out in Ballymena. Jim Molyneaux had thought that his election campaign was going very well. They (Ulster Unionists) got a sharp jab in the mouth! Molyneaux was now receiving orders from what might be described as the party leadership group.

I have recently met Molyneaux, Hume and Alderdice. Molyneaux was no longer "on the same rock" but was still committed to the principle of the three Strand approach but with no high wire acts. In practice, his strategy was, in effect, a two Strand approach. This would involve bilateral talks between the parties, with the two Governments talking to each other about Strand III. The Ulster Unionists' view was that there was no future in large-scale talks.

John Hume, for his part, is willing to talk to anyone. The Unionists will talk about economic or political matters on a bilateral basis. Alliance underwent a change of life at the end of the talks. I got good objective advice from them at first but they flipped at the end. Alderdice felt that the SDLP had not moved (Panel/Commissioners/Cabinet appointed by Commissioners etc.). Alderdice was incensed at the lack of movement on the part of the SDLP, as he saw it.

John Hume believes that his scheme was never properly examined. I think he would move from the three Commissioners idea. He is primarily concerned with Strand II, not the internal talks. There was opposition from the Unionists to the ideas put forward by the SDLP. As far as I can judge, the

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Autumn is the earliest possible date for talks. There is the possibility of bilateral talks in the meantime. The Tánaiste has done his bit to help the process but Paisley says he is not going anywhere until Articles 2 and 3 are sorted out. He is cavorting around the paddock. For our part, we do think it would help to put ideas down at this stage but there is no agreed package. Any paper which would be produced would have to be a British Government paper as otherwise it would be rejected by the Unionists. We are now hearing of alienation from the Unionists (reference to recent meeting with Archbishop Eames). The more the Government of Ireland can do the better i.e. extradition legislation.

Overall, the picture was rather opaque: the process cannot be hurried. Things have got more difficult rather than less difficult.

**Taoiseach:**

We are fully committed to the talks process. But I must ask how long this stance can last? The process has been delayed because of the local elections in Northern Ireland and now the Euro elections were beginning to enter the picture. After that, the Westminster elections would be next on the horizon. Where does this end?

**Secretary of State:**

There is a credibility problem.

**Taoiseach:**

We are agreed that we are going to go with the talks process.

**Secretary of State:**

At least beyond the Autumn.

**Taoiseach:**

It won't last much beyond that. I have always had reservations about Jim Molyneux. Looking at the situation from his perspective, what is in it for him? However, he has some very good people behind him. How can we harness them to support resumption of talks? You will have to gauge that. I take your point about the British paper but the two Governments have to work together behind the scenes..... What will the position be if the talks don't start again?

**Tánaiste:**

I agree with the Taoiseach. I have worked openly with Sir Patrick in trying to encourage political dialogue. However, the Unionists are not prepared to look at the options, whatever they are. If it was up to the two Governments, then they would solve the problem. Of course, any solution would have to be acceptable to the Parties in Northern Ireland. John Hume

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## Tánaiste: (contd.)

had proposed a certain strategy. The real difficulty at the moment is that ~~the Unionists~~ will not talk. The British Government has to emphasise to ~~these people that they must~~ find some way of getting politicians around the table. I tried everything possible on a personal and public basis. I am very worried about the Euro elections next year. Paisley will start campaigning but there is no real benefit in this for the people in Northern Ireland.

## Taoiseach:

The Unionists feel they are under siege. Also, there is fear of demographic changes. Genuine people want to talk but fears are there.

## Prime Minister:

~~A large part of the Catholic population would not vote for an united Ireland - that is what is said.~~ The question is how do we carry the Unionists? We can take them warmly by - or try to persuade them to talk. We could say to them we will see you alright (from a Parliamentary perspective) but we have not. What can we do? The Tánaiste, in his speech in March at the Mansion House, was very helpful. We will do everything within our power. It is worth throwing everything into the pot. Anything further you can do would greatly assist. For example, the Taoiseach might make a speech along the same lines as the Tánaiste's Mansion House speech or perhaps the Tánaiste might make a further speech in the same vein.

## Secretary of State:

The business community want talks. You could help also. In the course of my duties, I try to meet with ordinary people as often as I can. The mass of the people I meet want this (talks) notwithstanding the outcome of the local elections. We should ask what causes the Unionists to hold back. They point me to the differences between speeches made by the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste. They don't see the same forwardness. Articles 2 and 3 were very important. On the territorial claim, the Supreme Court had said that everyone in public office in the Republic must be committed to pursuing unity. In the light of the McGimpsey judgement, this was now seen to be a real impediment. If you can make the same speech as the Tánaiste has made - if you were to do this - it would be of great assistance.

## Taoiseach:

Until there is something on the table, the question of constitutional change will not arise..... Articles 2 and 3 have not been raised in this way before the McGimpsey case. Symbols are also important (the Taoiseach at this point referred to the Adelaide Hospital solution which, he said, showed clearly that "we are not ruled by Rome". Articles 2 and 3 were not just the issue.)

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**Tánaiste:**

Very many people raised the Adelaide Hospital issue with me. The Government had obtained an agreement on the Adelaide but since then, not one of those persons who had made representations to me on the subject, has said "well done". Over 20 years ago, the Article on the special position of the Catholic Church had been removed from the Constitution by an overwhelming vote. People who are not prepared to recognise realities will always find another hook. Articles 2 and 3 were becoming a mantra.

**Prime Minister:**

I would not dispute that.

**Tánaiste:**

The Unionists would be far better to negotiate from a position of strength. We are ready to talk to them. It was irresponsible for politicians not to come to the table.

**Secretary of State:**

Their leaders do not feel able to take an imaginative step - James Molyneux in particular. I want to mobilise public opinion. In Northern Ireland, politicians are considered to be a priestly class - guardians of the temple. I have been strongly criticised for saying that I would go over the heads of the politicians. I recognise that there is a limited term for this phase of the talks process. The question which I must consider is how to present politicians with proposals for their consideration - hence the proposed British paper. We will have to do the thinking for them as to what they should do.

**Taoiseach:**

And in the meantime?

**Secretary of State:**

If it all comes to grief, say by October, then the process would have to take on a different character.

**Taoiseach:**

And what about Paisley?

**Secretary of State:**

He has not painted himself into a corner.



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**John Chilcot (in response to an invitation from the Secretary of State to intervene):**

He will emerge at a price, in time.

**Prime Minister:**

I know there are questions on our blueprint and also on Paisley. Paisley likes to be centre-stage.

**Tánaiste:**

What does he want?

**John Chilcot:**

He is instinctively reactive. He worries about his succession.

**Taoiseach:**

Any ideas of what Unionist thinking is at present?

**Secretary of State:**

The Unionists, because they don't want to be part of the Republic, are anxious about their position. Seamus Mallon's recent statements, I regard as black mischief. They are worried about the future. They see Catholic families buying house property in particular areas and then feel they are being driven out of these areas. The reality is, of course, that people are leaving of their own choice. This is leading to greater segregation (which is not necessarily a bad thing perhaps). But the Protestants think they are being driven out. If Belfast City Council is a mirror image of political life, where are we going? Belfast is better than before but not much. There are 13 Councils where offices are being shared [I shouldn't say this but I did indicate at one stage that there would be extra financial benefits for power-sharing].

**Prime Minister:**

It is important that nobody gives up in seeking to find a solution. Unionists know that there can never be a Stormont again. A sensible agreement where power is shared is what we are seeking. That is the impulse - there is a lot there for their advantage.

**Taoiseach:**

How can we get others involved in talks - not necessarily Paisley?

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**Secretary of State:**

The more your Government can reach out to Unionists the better. Nationalists will look to Dublin in any event. On a case by case basis, cooperation can be seen to work.

**Prime Minister:**

I spoke to a person on the occasion of my recent visit to Northern Ireland who said that if the talks don't make progress, I should ask people to vote on a united Ireland. They may say "yes" or "no". But suppose there is no progress and the two Governments don't get closer, then give us a referendum to enable us to become more closely integrated into the U.K. We will have to do what we can. It will essentially be a mix of things. Courage will be required. From their own objective (Unionists) they are on a one-way street. Soft words are required from us, soft action from you. I do not under-estimate your difficulties on Articles 2 and 3. I understand gut political instincts. We are immensely grateful for the cross-border security cooperation which we have received. This is a tremendous bonus.

**Secretary of State:**

On security, intelligence is the key. The British Government are constrained by the rule of law. Others are not. There is a tremendously good relationship between the Garda Commissioner and the Chief Constable of the RUC. Undoubtedly, the border is an asset for terrorists. Intelligence is the key to that problem. [The Secretary of State made a reference to the South Armagh active service unit of the PIRA and to active service units "over here". More resources were advocated. There was no lack of will. An official group consisting of the Permanent Secretary of the NIO and the Secretary of the Department of Justice were dealing with a number of security issues.]

**John Chilcot:**

We have exchanged papers. These mostly bear on intelligence. We have got an agenda and are working it up. We are getting ahead with the work. It is very important to share information: we have got to complement other policies. There is a lot of ground to make up.

**Tim Dalton:**

We have had an exchange of papers. There are proposals which, for various reasons, present difficulties. There are aspects of what has been raised which we must discuss. We can report later.

**Prime Minister:**

When we next meet, we must ask for a joint paper from John and Tim. This would be something which would be jolly useful to have - not 50 pages, a couple of pages on different headings would be sufficient.

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**Taoiseach:**

I would be quite happy about it.

**John Chilcot:**

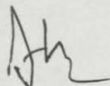
We can cover the whole area and it would not be a lengthy paper.

**Secretary of State:**

In the meantime, you can be assured that we will do our very best on the main point.

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At this stage, the Dinner discussion concluded. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister, accompanied by the Tánaiste, the Secretary of State, the Secretary to the Cabinet, the Permanent Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office, both Ambassadors, the Prime Minister's Private Secretary and the under-signed, retired to the Prime Minister's Study for a separate meeting on the President's visit to Northern Ireland. This meeting is the subject of a separate note.



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Frank Murray,  
18 June, 1993.

c.c. Secretary Dorr, Department of Foreign Affairs;  
Asst. Sec. O'hUiginn, Department of Foreign Affairs;  
Secretary Dalton, Department of Justice;  
Ambassador Small, Irish Embassy, London.

For information.

