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Reference Code: 2021/95/33

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AN RÚNAÍÓCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

BÉAL FEIRSTE

BELFAST

1 April, 1993

Confidential

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

Dear Assistant Secretary

Visit of Archbishop Eames

The Most Reverend Dr Robin Eames came to dinner at the Secretariat last night, accompanied by his secretary Mrs Elizabeth Gibson-Harries. The conversation was mainly on political matters.

Summary Points

The Archbishop spoke very frankly over a period of four hours. His main points were in summary:

- Unionists have come to tolerate the Anglo-Irish Agreement but they see the agenda as directed entirely against them and they see no reciprocity. Is there nothing in the Agreement that would enable issues in the South to be taken up? In Conference communiques and press conferences, can we not demonstrate to Northern Protestants that we care about them too? Could we please consider the language we use. Why do the communiques which are read with great care and by a great many people - some of them people we would not imagine - have to bear the stamp of the SDLP?
- He has made representations directly and personally to three Taoisigh about the Adelaide Hospital. The Northern Protestants will watch carefully to see whether the Government's promise to preserve the ethos of the Adelaide is fulfilled.
- In his travels among Church of Ireland members in the South, he finds a blankness about Northern Ireland which increases as he moves further from the border. Southern Protestants see Northern Ireland as it was 35 years ago, not as it is now.

- In recent years Northern Protestants have become more aware of their position as a minority in Ireland than of their position as a majority in Northern Ireland. They are feeling isolated from Britain and from the South.
- The real level of support for loyalist paramilitaries (which a poll published in today's News Letter puts at a minimum of 42%) is hard to judge but he knows it is increasing, applicants are now being turned away and the organisations are more professional and better organised.
- The circumstances of the Magee case have made an impact among Northern Protestants who have been concerned about the whole question of extradition and the attitude of our Courts for many years. We cannot afford another "mistake".
- His judgement is that the Talks will not be resumed in the last format. There are only "one or two" who would sit down again on the same basis. He thinks the two Governments should "sound out a blueprint" with the parties, holding in reserve the "threat" or "pressure" that the blueprint will be published if no progress is made. It should be based on the progress made in the last round. There cannot, however, be any question of an imposed solution. The value of threatening to publish simply lies in the fact that people will demand to know from their leaders why they rejected the plan.
- Northern Protestants need to think much more deeply about their own identity and how they are going to have to change. In particular, they must prepare themselves for sitting down across the table from their enemies in Sinn Fein/IRA if or when the violence ceases. He is not at all certain that his Northern flock are capable of this. We might not realise how deep the wounds have gone in the last twenty three years. We might not see as he does the photographs on mantels and wardrobes, the plaques on church walls dedicated to loved ones murdered by terrorists.
- He is already thinking over a speech on the identity theme which he proposes to make to the Synod in Dublin on 11 May. He would welcome any guidance the Government can give him as he prepares for that speech. He will be in Dublin in the week beginning 26 April and would like to call on the Tanaiste.

Political Talks

Our presentation to the Archbishop was on the following lines:

- Solid Governments are now in place in London and Dublin with mandates for four years or so. It should be of particular interest to Unionists that the Government in Dublin have the largest majority in the history of the State and, as has been shown in their Programme, and in a number of speeches by the Taoiseach and the Tanaiste, are determined and energetic in pursuit of a political settlement. The Tanaiste brings to his new responsibilities for Northern Ireland the authority of his position in Government, previous experience of the Anglo-Irish process, a keen personal desire to make progress and an openness of mind.
- We have been rather disappointed by the Unionist reaction to the Tanaiste's Irish Association speech although we recognise that not too much should be expected in the run-up to the Local Elections on 19 May. Were there different views behind the rhetoric?

Intervening to respond, the Archbishop said there were different views beneath the rhetoric. Molyneaux, whom he knew intimately, was not ruling out talks but he had to keep his eye on the Local Elections. Secondly, he had to think of the succession. He would go quite soon "with the pat on the back" of a seat in the House of Lords. In the meantime, he had to steer a course between the liberals, the traditionalists and the mavericks, between Derry (Willy Ross) and Dungannon (Ken Maginnis). Thirdly, he had been extremely doubtful that the format agreed for the last talks would work and he felt he had been proven right. The Archbishop was aware of the Tanaiste's meeting with the McGimpseys and agreed that it had gone well.

The Conference

The Archbishop was vehement at times about the Agreement: "we are still trying to recover from the disastrous way it was brought in". The Dublin Government seemed indifferent to Unionists and uncomprehending of their situation. Conference after Conference had gone past and Unionists had seen that there was nothing in the Agreement for them. No gesture in their direction in the North. No mention of any issue of interest to them in the South. The Conference was at its lowest an irrelevancy, at its highest an irritation.

We pointed out that the Agreement was helping to rectify the very indifference and lack of sense responsibility of which he

complained in the South. The ability to put forward views and proposals itself implied taking an interest, becoming better informed and having a sense of responsibility. It was true that the Agreement concerned matters exclusive to Northern Ireland except for cooperation in the security, economic, social and cultural fields. The reason for that was because at the time it was impossible to go deeper. The Unionist parties would not have countenanced it. Any significant, broader arrangement replacing the Agreement would have to imply means of mutual influence; indeed, new measures would be required both North and South to satisfy all legitimate views.

In response and contradicting some of his earlier remarks, the Archbishop said that any gesture made by the Conference in the direction of Northern Protestants would have a tremendous impact. Could we not say that we had been supportive of the case of the UDR 4? Could we not say that we were concerned no less about poverty and deprivation in Protestant areas than in Catholic areas?

We did not go into the details of the UDR 4 case except that the Archbishop himself said that he had recently spent three hours with Neil Latimer and, after it, was still not sure of the extent of Latimer's involvement in the murder of Roddy Carroll. He seemed to be aware that the case had arisen at the Conference (on the basis of our own soundings, we took the view that those involved were most likely guilty as sentenced).

We said we were already considering his point about a reference to Protestant deprivation, although we wondered whether that might be denounced as interfering or phoney (the Archbishop thought not).

Taking up his point about Conference communiques, we said that in recent years, the Conference had addressed the question of progress in the political process at every session; and at every session the language chosen by the Governments had been quite deliberately their own. We could not accept that it bore the mark of the SDLP and we would like to see evidence for that view.

Second, every Conference since 1985 had discussed security cooperation with the participation of the police chiefs. As a result, the level of cooperation was now much higher than ever before. Extradition arrangements had changed too and further legislation was in the pipeline. Surely that was a matter of particular interest to Unionists?

Third, since 1990 the Conference had embarked on a whole range of topics in economics and social cooperation which had borne fruit; it had recently agreed a further programme for the next

half dozen meetings. These were not pro-SDLP or pro-Nationalist initiatives. They were intended to be effective for both North and South, for Nationalists and Unionists alike.

Fourth, the Conference had dwelt on the subject of disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland and I really doubted if the Archbishop could find in any Conference communique the suggestion that our interest was exclusively confined to Catholic areas.

The Archbishop intervened to say dismissively that North/South economic cooperation was not really what people were interested in. They were interested in stopping the killing and getting jobs. We accepted that this was the case but pointed out that he himself had argued in recent speeches about the need to work below the headlines and to avoid the dramatic gesture. The Conference had worked away patiently on North/South cooperation, had achieved success and was helping to produce jobs. There had been a 14% increase in Southern tourists to Northern Ireland last year which was an economic benefit as well as a benefit to the mutual understanding which we both agreed was lacking. Despite the recession, trade had increased somewhat in the last year. These were not negligible achievements and we hoped that when people spoke to him critically about the Conference, he would not let their misperceptions go unchallenged.

The Archbishop was apologetic and, although I think not convinced, said he would bear these views in mind in his discussions with critics of the Conference. He came back, however, on the issue of security cooperation. He was not sure that the rank and file of the RUC were convinced of its merits. He had been in the barracks at Bessbrook after the recent mortar attack. Nobody had been killed or injured but property had been destroyed including the cars of several officers. When he arrived, however, he found ten officers and a couple of soldiers playing video games in a recreation room. He expressed surprise to the sergeant that they were not out scouring the countryside for the perpetrators and was told that under the Anglo-Irish Agreement they were not let. The Archbishop could not explain the remark or defend it. He was aware that the attack had been done from within the North. Yet he obviously thought the remark counted for something "as a perception". Again, we asked him not to let such perceptions go unchallenged. The fact was that security cooperation was a great deal better. We could not imagine why the RUC were not out scouring the countryside except that they might be concerned for their own safety in that area. If they were concerned about views we expressed under the Agreement about their own reactions to such attacks in house searches and incidents with civilians, those views were expressed in

their own interest as it was seen by both Governments. (The British Joint Secretary intervened to agree. (As it happened, there were complaints later from the local PP about over-the-top reactions by the police to the attack.)

Comment

This was a ground-breaking occasion for the Secretariat. It is the first time we have had the Archbishop here for dinner and his acceptance and willingness, indeed keenness, to speak frankly does itself demonstrate a change in the Unionist mood over the last eight years. Whereas in 1985 the attitude of many Unionists would have been at best: "you have a damn cheek to be interfering here", now it is more on the lines "what the hell is the Irish Government doing to stop the killing?" as one Unionist said to me recently at dinner.

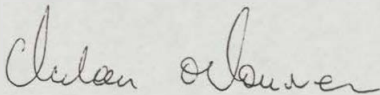
The Archbishop spoke with great urgency and with passion about the problems facing Northern Protestants, very much along the lines of those who have been arguing the idea of "Protestant alienation", although he did not use that phrase. When we mentioned that among others who had advanced similar views to us was the Presbyterian Moderator, Dr Dunlop, the Archbishop responded a little sharply that he represented a great many more Protestants in Ireland than Dr Dunlop. We sensed from this and other reactions, some irritation with the Moderator.

There was a difference of view with the Moderator also. When the Archbishop spoke at one point of Northern Protestants being delivered from their nightmare (like "alienation" an echo of Nationalist speeches before the Agreement) we asked if he meant that Protestants wanted to be delivered from the prospect of a united Ireland? The Archbishop was quite categorical that he was talking about violence and not about a united Ireland. Protestants saw that as "academic" and most Catholics in Northern Ireland would be satisfied with arrangements which ensured them social justice. These comments and others indicated that the Archbishop's attitude to a political accommodation probably follow along the lines of the UUP position at the last talks.

The Archbishop brought up a number of times his own experience of living in the South, his knowledge of people there and his wide travels. He stressed a number of times that he was Primate of all Ireland. We got the impression that he wanted in some sense to prove his credentials to us. His secretary intervened at one point to say that at a recent meeting in the South a member of his audience had asked him if he was a Unionist, as if his answer would determine the reaction to any comments he might give. He had replied that he spoke on behalf of all members of the Church of Ireland but it seemed to us that he was slightly despairing of attitudes among

indifference to the North sat rather uneasily with the very strongly delivered views he had to give on the Adelaide Hospital from a Northern perspective. On that matter, we pointed to the Government's commitment to preserve the ethos of the hospital and we asked him to accept that there were other factors involved such as the urgent need of a hospital in Tallaght, the need to use scarce resources wisely and the inevitable jockeying for position that was involved in the merger of any institutions, points which he allowed were valid. As he left, the Archbishop asked us to keep in contact with him and said he would very much like to visit again. He particularly asked that we stay in touch with him in the next couple of months. Finally, he asked if it would be possible to arrange a call on the Tanaiste, mentioning that he would be in Dublin in the week beginning 26 April.

Yours sincerely



Declan O' Donovan
Joint Secretary