



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

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2021/95/36
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

AMBASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

25

17, GROSVENOR PLACE,  
SW1X 7HR

Telephone: 071-235 2171

TELEX: 916104

Fax: 071-245 6961

FAX

For: HQ - Anglo Irish  
For: Hennessy

From: Embassy London  
From: Hayes/Nolan

Northern Ireland Questions  
1 July 1993

This acrimonious and well attended session - probably the last before the recess - was dominated by the leaked Labour discussion document. The issue was raised in a planted supplementary on the first question from Iain Duncan Smith, Norman Tebbit's successor in Chingford. Mayhew replied that constitutional certainty was important and that this was represented by the Government's guarantee that there would be no change in the status of Northern Ireland without the consent of the majority. This, he said, was also reflected in Article I of the Agreement. Quoting from Frank Millar's article in the Irish Times, which he referred to repeatedly throughout the afternoon, Mayhew said that it was alarming to find McNamara confirming reports that Labour party policy on NI was moving towards joint sovereignty or shared responsibility and that the policy paper acknowledged that this would have to be imposed against the will of the majority.

Paisley intervened to say that the Agreement failed to spell out the position of Northern Ireland within the UK, an ambiguity compounded by Articles 2 and 3. Mayhew said that this was one of the reasons why it would be helpful to have a successor to the Anglo Irish agreement which would provide an opportunity for an unambiguous statement of Northern Ireland's position. He repeated his usual remarks about the unhelpful nature of Articles 2 and 3.

Hume then made a strong intervention although falling foul of the Speaker for making a speech rather than putting a question. To derisory laughter from the Unionists - and some Tories - he said that he had never seen McNamara's document. He went on to say that the Government's over reaction to "an academic document" had more to do with the politics of the House than with Northern Ireland. He referred to the McGimpsey allegation that this was an SDLP/Labour plot to stop the talks and reminded the House that before the General Election the SDLP had requested McNamara and Kinnock to give a commitment to resume the talks on precisely the same basis should Labour win the general election. He pointed out that the Maastricht treaty had committed both the British and Irish governments to ever closer union which in

effect meant shared sovereignty over a much wider range of issues. Mayhew replied that Hume might not have seen the document but he should have seen it. (There were mutters of "The Irish Government have seen it").

David Alton of the Liberal Democrats, in a rare appearance, criticised the Government's over reaction which he said was a disappointment to many people. He welcomed honest intellectual debate, which might move away from the certainties which only led to sterility.

McNamara intervened from a scripted statement quoting from a 1970's document prepared by Willie Whitelaw which put forward a number of options including a partial transfer of sovereignty. He asked Mayhew to confirm that such documents make a useful and positive contribution. In any case had not the Government imposed the Anglo Irish agreement on an unwilling majority and not one Irish member had voted for the Government of Ireland Act. Mayhew replied that the difference between Labour's document and the Whitelaw document was that the latter had been published without a contemporary expression of Government policy. He then picked on a point made in the document to the effect that an improvement in the economy of Northern Ireland might have the unfortunate effect of reconciling Catholics to its current status. He called on McNamara to repudiate this.

Andrew Hunter, Chairman of the Tories NI committee described McNamara's "secret paper" as a callous disregard for the democratically expressed wishes of the majority in Northern Ireland.

Campbell Savours (Labour) praised McNamara's ideas on law enforcement as a breath of fresh air and asked Mayhew to look at them constructively. Mayhew replied that he did not know whether they were "fresh air, hot air or the declared policy of the Labour party". Peter Bottomley called for the document to be published openly and for the Labour leadership to make its position on it known.

McNamara attempted to deal with the various points but fell foul of the Speaker who insisted that he ask a question rather than replying to questions. He did however manage to say that the document was a discussion paper and that Labour party policy was made by Conference and not by the whim of the spokesman who has however a duty to lead the discussion.

Peter Luff (Conservative) asked if the indecision created by McNamara's document did not make the work of the security forces more difficult. Mayhew replied that anything which contributed to uncertainty regarding constitutional change without consent must make the task of the security forces harder.

The matter arose also at Prime Minister's Questions in the first question put by James Paice (Conservative) who asked the Prime Minister to find time to assure the people of Ulster that this Government is totally committed to the Union. There is he said a plot to ditch them and the Labour leader should either support that betrayal or sack his spokesman.

The PM replied that the Union was vital for all parts of the UK. It has the democratic approval of the people of Northern Ireland and the Conservative and Unionist party (cheers from the Tory benches) stands four square behind it. He was he said aware of the proposals for joint authority and of the fact that it was the intention to impose it against the will of the majority which he found "frankly appalling". He could only assume that Labour had abandoned its manifesto

commitment to unity by consent and appeared to want to promote a united Ireland by economic deprivation. This was a shameful betrayal of the people of Northern Ireland. Smith, despite loud taunts of "answer, answer" and "sack him, sack him" refused to respond, concentrating instead on the latest revelation about Tory party funding.

The controversy generated by the leaked document is clearly going to be around for some time - partly because it suits the Government as a convenient distraction from other issues whereby they can launch an attack on apparently secret undemocratic and subversive Labour party documents. The danger in this, as evidenced by the language and heat generated in today's exchanges, is that the Government are driven to emphasise their unionist credentials and commitment to maintenance of the status quo. The Unionists meanwhile can sit by and watch the row develop to their benefit and Molyneaux clearly had given instructions to his team to stay out of what he described sarcastically as "a twenty minute display of reconciliation and bi-partisanship". McNamara has privately been assured of Smith's support. We know however that the Labour party press officers, in the persons of David Hill and Hilary Coffman, are annoyed that McNamara's team allowed them to be taken by surprise in not providing them with advance warning of the article in the Guardian. Smith has also avoided direct comment and privately the line being taken is that party policy is a matter for the National Executive and Conference.

The other major issue of interest to arise today was Extradition when Maginnis criticised the "perversity and carelessness of the Irish republic" and stated that cross border security cooperation was "a mere figment of a fertile political imagination". Mayhew replied that he was disappointed that there would be no amendment of Irish Extradition laws this session but he would be seeking assurances of an early resolution of this issue. Both Governments wished to close the loophole, he did not share Maginnis's ultra critical view and he reminded him that he had previously commended the work of the Gardai.

There was also a reference to Mayhew's recent statement about the routing of marches. McNamara accused Mayhew of misrepresenting the work of the IGC by suggesting that parades were never discussed. Mayhew replied that his comments had referred specifically to the routing of last Saturday's march. The general topic did fall within the ambit of the IGC. If McNamara was seeking to "get out his muck rake again he had chosen the wrong heap".