



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/48/116

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.



TELEPHONE
(212) 319-2555
FAX
(212) 940-9475

CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

345 PARK AVENUE

NEW YORK, NY 10154-0037

DATE: 24 OCTOBER 1994.

FOR: HQ, ANGLO-IRISH.

FROM: CON. GEN. NEW YORK.

FOR: GERRY CORR.

FROM: DERMOT BRANGAN.

SUBJECT: LOYALISTS AT THE NCAFF.

1. ATTENDED THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY LUNCHEON MEETING AT WHICH MEMBERS OF THE LOYALIST PARTIES GAVE A PRESENTATION FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION. THE PUP WAS REPRESENTED BY WILLIAM HUTCHINSON, GUSTY SPENCE AND DAVID ERVINE. THE UDP WERE REPRESENTED BY DAVID ADAMS, JOSEPH ENGLISH AND GARY MCMICHAEL. AFTER ABOUT 70 HAD LUNCH, THE PRESENTATION WAS OPENED TO THE PRESS. SOME 7 TELEVISION CAMERAS INCL. BBC, UTV, RTE, CNN AND REUTERS WERE PRESENT PLUS SOME 20 PRINT JOURNALISTS.

2. PRESENTATIONS OF 10 MINUTES LENGTH WERE GIVEN BY GARY MCMICHAEL OF THE UDP AND DAVID ERVINE OF THE PUP. MCMICHAEL'S PRESENTATION WAS BASED HEAVILY ON THE COMMON SENSE DOCUMENT WHILE ERVINE'S WAS AD LIB AND MORE PASSIONATE. BOTH SOUNDED VERY REASONABLE AND STRESSED THAT THE JOINT DECLARATION WAS THE MAIN REASON WHY THEY WERE HERE AND WHY THE LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES COULD DECLARE A CEASEFIRE. ERVINE SAID THAT THE DECLARATION WAS NOT PERFECT BUT THAT IT HAD CREATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE GUN OUT OF IRISH POLITICS. BOTH SPOKE OF NEED FOR BILL OF RIGHTS AND FOR ALL PARTIES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE TALKS PROCESS. BOTH PRESENTATIONS REFERRED TO AN IRISH DIMENSION. MCMICHAEL CITED THE 1937 CONSTITUTION, THE COUNCIL OF IRELAND ASPECT OF SUNNINGDALE AND THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT AS EXAMPLES OF WHERE THE SOUTH HAD NOT USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS WITH THE NORTH. MCMICHAEL SAID THAT COOPERATION WITH THE SOUTH IN TOURISM, FISHING ETC WAS FINE BUT THERE WAS NO CONSENT IN NI FOR NORTH/SOUTH INSTITUTIONS WITH EXECUTIVE POWERS. ERVINE SAID HE WAS PREPARED TO HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH SO THAT THE 40% NATIONALISTS MINORITY COULD FEEL "COMFORTABLE" WITHIN NI.

3. THE Q&A THAT FOLLOWED LASTED FOR ALMOST AN HOUR. THE FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST AROSE:

*PST, 2 July
1995
After ob. in.
Dr. Mandy H.
Secretary
Embassy London
Counsellors A1*

(A) FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION.

MCMICHAEL SAID HE WOULDN'T GO THE FORUM. HE WAS FAR MORE INTERESTED IN THE TALKS PROCESS AND THAT THE FORUM HAD A PREDETERMINED NATIONALIST OUTCOME. HUTCHINSON SAID THAT THEY WEREN'T INVITED WHILE ERVINE SAID THAT GOING TO FORUM WOULD LEGITIMISE IT. HE SAID HE WOULD TALK TO DUBLIN AFTER INTERNAL STRUCTURES WERE SET UP.

(B) TALKING WITH SINN FEIN.

BOTH MCMICHAEL, ERVINE AND ENGLISH SAW TALKS WITH SINN FEIN FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD BUT NOT NOW. PEACE PROCESS NEEDED TIME TO DEVELOP. SPENCE BELIEVED THAT TALKS WITH SINN FEIN COULD BEGIN ANYTIME AFTER THE BRITISH HAD BEGUN TO TALK TO THEM.

(C) PRISONERS AND SURRENDER OF ARMS ISSUES.

ERVINE SAID THAT THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WILL HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED BUT THAT ANY RELEASE MUST BE MINDFUL OF THE REACTION OF RELATIVES OF THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE. ERVINE SAID THAT REALISTICALLY, DOWN THE ROAD THE MEANS OF WAR WOULD HAVE TO DEALT WITH BUT IT WAS TOO EARLY AS YET TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE. ERVINE MENTIONED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TALKED TO THEM PREVIOUSLY NOR HAD IT GIVEN ANY ASSISTANCE TO THEM TO HELP DELIVER THE LOYALIST CEASEFIRE. PRESUMABLY THE CLOCK IS TICKING FOR THEM FOR TALKS WITH THE BRITISH AND THEN THE ABOVE ISSUES COULD BE DISCUSSED.

(D) US ROLE IN THE PROCESS.

NEITHER THE PUP OR THE UDP BELIEVED THAT THE US HAD ANY ROLE EXCEPT PERHAPS AN ECONOMIC ONE IN NI. ERVINE SAID THAT IF THE US AS THE MORAL GUARDIAN OF DEMOCRACY ACROSS THE WORLD FELT IT SHOULD TAKE A ROLE, ALL HE ASKED FOR WAS EVENHANDEDNESS. HE REMARKED THAT IN A DIVIDED SOCIETY, PERCEPTION WAS EVERYTHING. ENGLISH BELIEVED THAT PARTIES IN NI SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE TO FORGE THEIR OWN FUTURE.

(E) FUTURE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT.

ERVINE SAID THAT, AFTER THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE, THEY WERE ASSURED THAT A FUTURE LABOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WHOLLY COMMITTED TO THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSENT IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT BECOME PERSUADERS FOR A UNITED IRELAND. HE CITED THE REPLACEMENT OF MCNAMARA AS EVIDENCE OF BLAIR'S GOOD FAITH ON THIS ISSUE.

COMMENT.

REASONABLENESS MASKED AN UNWILLINGNESS TO ENTERTAIN ANY ROLE FOR THE IRISH GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE OF NI. ERVINE SAID THAT THE BIGGEST PROBLEM TO BE FACED IN THE FUTURE WILL BE NI'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOUTH. ALL SPEAKERS SAW NI AS AN INTERNAL PROBLEM. BILL OF RIGHTS, MORE INTEGRATED EDUCATION, AND PARITY OF ESTEEM WERE SEEN AS IMPORTANT FOR A FUTURE NI AND THAT THESE WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO SATISFY NATIONALISTS. ERVINE SAW ACCOMMODATION WITH NATIONALIST EG A 60% MAJORITY NEED TO PASS LEGISLATION IN NEW ASSEMBLY AND ENDORSED A MOVE AWAY FROM MAJORITARIAN POLITICS. SEVERAL SPEAKERS ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE SETTING UP OF AN ASSEMBLY AND BILL OF RIGHTS SHOULD TAKE PLACE BEFORE ANY TALKS WITH THE SOUTH. IRISH GOVERNMENT ROLE TO EVOLVE IN A LIMITED WAY AFTER DEMOCRACY IS RESTORED TO NI.

CC. MR. MICHAEL COLLINS, EMBASSY WASHINGTON.