



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

**Reference Code:** 2021/96/18

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Accession Conditions:** Open

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

SECRET

cc PST  
PSS, Finlay  
Justice  
Minister of  
Agriculture  
& Fisheries  
Dublin  
Counsellors &

Informal meeting between Tanaiste and Secretary of State  
Dublin, 5 March 1994

1. The Tanaiste had an informal meeting with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in Iveagh House on Saturday 5 March.
2. Following a thirty-minute tete-a-tete conversation, they were joined by officials for a working brunch. On the Irish side were Secretary Dorr, Asst. Sec. O hUiginn, D. O' Donovan, F. Finlay, N. Burgess and the undersigned. On the British side were Ambassador Blatherwick, Q. Thomas and J. Stephens.
3. The following is a summary note of the discussion around the table.
4. The Tanaiste said that, in their tete-a-tete conversation, he and the Secretary of State had assessed the prospects for a favourable response to the Joint Declaration. They had also agreed on the importance of a meeting of minds between the two Governments on how to take forward the work to be done on a joint framework document for new talks.
5. The Secretary of State said he was very pleased with the Liaison Group's work. There had been some useful meetings and there would be another one next Tuesday. It was unlikely that a completed report would be ready in time for the Conference next Thursday. He wished to look at this work on the basis which had been agreed last September. The aim should be to come up with joint

ideas on how a package might look which would get general acceptance.

As regards the UUP's publication of its "Blueprint for Stability", he noted a very substantial gap between the document itself and Molyneaux's accompanying press conference. The contents of the appended "late submission" by three prominent businessmen seemed uncontroversial for both Governments. Molyneaux had told the Secretary of State that his party's representatives were still authorised to speak in bilateral mode upon the same basis as before. They had agreed that this would be said publicly.

The Tanaiste and the Secretary of State had noted that there had been a real deterioration in Unionist confidence and had agreed that this would have to be addressed in the most helpful way possible.

6. The Tanaiste said that they had also noted that the Unionists had taken no opportunity so far to highlight what was in the Joint Declaration for them. They had acquiesced with the Declaration but had not focussed on those elements which were of value for them. Efforts might perhaps be made by the two Governments, either in public or in private, to draw attention to those elements.
  
7. The Secretary of State said that the Unionists were frustrated because the Governments, and in particular the British Government, seemed to be waiting on Sinn Fein for movement in relation to the Declaration. This was not the case. Nothing was in abeyance. It was important to emphasize that the two Governments were holding to the 26 March terms and to the Declaration as the bases for the talks process. The talks process was, after all,

the only thing of a positive character available to the two Governments if "these people do not come out of the wood". At the same time, however, the Declaration would continue to stand.

In response to O hUiginn, who noted the difficulty of bringing forward the talks process if the Unionists position was to be defined in terms of the "Blueprint for Stability", the Secretary of State observed that the UUP were willing to continue to talk in bilateral mode across all three strands. The two Governments and the parties recognized that this was not the right time to sit down to round-table talks but they were also agreed that they would all have to get to round-table talks in due course.

8. The Tanaiste commented that, whether we liked it or not, the European Parliament elections were a feature on the landscape. The two Governments would have to see what they could do among themselves and at official level between now and those elections.

The Secretary of State remarked that the recent Sunday Independent poll had been very significant and helpful. He suggested that, in the light of this poll, Unionists would not wish to be seen to be putting anything "on ice". 86% of people North and South approved the talks process and applauded the two Governments' commitment to it.

He commented that Paisley now seemed a shrunken figure (a view with which Seamus Mallon had concurred in a conversation the previous evening).

Secretary Dorr observed that the European Parliament elections were traditionally the DUP leader's high watermark. O'Donovan commented that fear of the DUP had

precipitated last Monday's UUP development. Ambassador Blatherwick noted that Peter Robinson had been playing a lead role in the DUP since Christmas. The Secretary of State mentioned a private comment by Seamus Mallon that Paisley had not been performing well in the House of Commons.

Noting the result in the Victoria Ward bye-election (a rebuff to the DUP), O hUiginn wondered what reason the UUP had to be so fearful. He also noted that the "Blueprint for Stability" was not a sudden development but had been in preparation over a long period; indeed, it had reportedly been ready for launching very soon after the Declaration was signed.

The Secretary of State suggested that pressure had been building up within the UUP from the constituencies. There was frustration over developments such as the Adams visa controversy, the lifting of Section 31, the decision in the Magee extradition case and his own recent speeches which had been addressed to the Sinn Fein constituency. A disparity had also been noted between statements by the Irish Government which indicated some understanding for Sinn Fein's position and the brusque nature of Dublin's response to the Unionists' anxieties (which had included renewed characterisations of Northern Ireland as a failed political entity).

Molyneux had been pulled back by the British Government from his press conference remarks. He knew that there was no mileage in trying to get the British Government to retreat from the three-stranded talks process. The manner in which he had rejected the latter, however, had been a major setback (though the Secretary of State had himself expected worse).



9. The Tanaiste raised the question of a possible visit by the UUP to the United States.

O hUiginn said that there were plans for a big delegation to go after Easter. The US Embassy in Dublin would be facilitating a call on Vice-President Gore (a significant gesture towards them). Molyneaux had written to Bill Flynn saying that the UUP did not wish to accept the latter's particular invitation but that they would travel to the US under their own steam and would be available for contact. Jeffrey Donaldson had indicated to the US Embassy that Molyneaux was likely to take part in the visit. However, his close associates were sceptical about this.

Thomas commented that the UUP would lack the attractions (in US media terms) of an acknowledged terrorist who had been denied a voice in the British media for many years.

10. Reviewing the Adams visit, the Secretary of State suggested that "the needle has swung back on Adams' altometer" in the meantime.

The Tanaiste noted the importance of President Clinton having made clear the expectations which lay behind the decision to grant Adams a visa. The visit had been hyped in media terms, but that was in the nature of things in the U.S. The media always went wherever the action was. What was important was that the Irish-American lobby was very firmly behind the Declaration. He thought it unlikely that Adams would be given an "entree" a second time. The Secretary of State agreed.

O hUiginn suggested that Adams would not apply a second time (though he had received further invitations from the

US).

11. Responding to Ambassador Blatherwick, who warned of the impact of an Adams visit on militant Irish-American opinion, the Tanaiste pointed out that, while the recent visit had generated a media circus, this was understandable against the background of Adams' exclusion from the U.S. over the previous 20 years. The President's public expression of strong support for the two Governments and the Declaration, and his call on Adams to give the same support, had been of critical importance. According to the Tanaiste's own U.S. contacts, there was a widespread perception that Adams had been caught "offside". It was important to recognize the enormous shift in Irish-American opinion over the past twenty years. In this respect, he recalled that, of all the questions he had fielded in a question-and-answer session following his address to the Johns Hopkins School of International Studies last November, a mere two had been based on traditional Republican mythology.

Secretary Dorr recalled accompanying the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Garret FitzGerald, to the U.S. on a visit in the mid-seventies. The delegation had been jeered at and shouted out at one point and had had to be rushed out of the premises concerned. The contrast between then and now was dramatic.

11. The Secretary of State mentioned that, during a visit to Boston last year, he had been favourably impressed by the degree of understanding shown. The Declaration would have enhanced that in the interim.
12. Returning to the UUP development, O'Donovan asked whether the Secretary of State had any sense that Molyneaux might

consider that he had gone "over the top" at his press conference. The Secretary of State replied that it was very difficult to read Molyneaux. Ambassador Blatherwick noted that the UUP were not very skilled at handling the press.

The Secretary of State reiterated that the UUP were under very real pressures at present.

13. Secretary Dorr asked the Secretary of State for his understanding of the UUP's precise attitude towards three-stranded talks; it appeared that Molyneaux was sticking to the idea of Strand One being completed before Strand Two could be addressed.

The Secretary of State replied that the latter scenario was what the UUP leader would prefer; however, he knew that an opportunity must also be offered for similar progress to be made in relation to Strand Two.

Thomas recalled the Unionist stipulation in the 1991-92 talks that the transition to Strand Two would depend on "substantial progress" being made. He suggested that the UUP leader must know the problems which would be created if he tried to get back into "that boggy ground". More generally, it was of interest to recall that, despite all the difficulties with the Unionists during 1991 over the conditions for talks, they were suddenly ready to enter talks once "the moment came right". If, therefore, the two Governments could set the right framework for talks, people could be expected to "jump back in".

The Secretary of State said that he was sure that there was a deal to be done. This was not to say that he thought this probable; merely that there were sensible



grounds for hoping that a deal would be possible in the shorter rather than in the longer term.

14. Noting the regular UUP complaints about returning empty-handed from Dublin during the 1992 talks, Secretary Dorr pointed out that there was in the meantime a new Irish Government with a new Programme and suggested that it should be emphasized in private contacts with the UUP that a completely different situation now obtained.

The Secretary of State thought that Ken Maginnis realized that what was now on offer in relation to Articles 2 and 3 was indeed what the UUP had been looking for in 1992. However, the DUP's taunts about returning from Dublin empty-handed had "eaten into his soul". The Secretary of State noted approvingly that the earlier controversy about "could" and "would" had been disposed of in the meantime. He agreed that anything which Ministers might say to assuage Unionist concerns in this area would be beneficial.

15. O hUiginn commented that two outside factors had to be taken into account in relation to the UUP. First, a leadership contest was effectively underway and the Declaration was being used as a football in this respect (with aspirants to the leadership such as Willie Ross leading the doubters). Second, the implications of Ken Maginnis having to stand (under the proposed Parliamentary boundary changes) in a new Blackwater constituency - which would have fewer nationalists and more DUP-type voters - would have to be considered.

The Secretary of State commented that Mr O hUiginn was "a closer student of the Boundary Commission than I am".

16. Asked by Ambassador Blatherwick for his reading of the

SDLP at present, the Tánaiste said that they were very upset about the Boundary Commission's proposed changes. They would get engaged in talks as long as these were understood to be aimed at a deep and wide settlement. They were opposed to a minimalist solution without significant North/South structures. They were also very strongly attached to the Declaration.

O hUiginn added that the SDLP believed that the British Government were concerned to be amenable to the Unionists, perhaps because of Westminster considerations.

Asked by Ambassador Blatherwick how the SDLP were likely to fare electorally vis-a-vis Sinn Fein, the Tánaiste suggested that John Hume would be safe in the EP election. Ambassador Blatherwick said he had heard suggestions that the positions of Joe Hendron, Seamus Mallon and Eddie McGrady might be undermined. O hUiginn pointed out that McGrady's worries related first and foremost to the changes proposed by the Boundary Commission in relation to South Down.

17. In conclusion, there was a brief discussion of the line to be taken in response to media queries about the meeting.

The Secretary of State planned to say that (i) the UUP would be continuing to talk bilaterally and on the same basis as before; and (ii) the two Governments stood fully behind both the Declaration and the talks process.

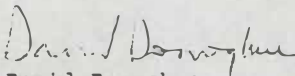
O hUiginn emphasized the notion of building on the Declaration.

The Tánaiste planned to say that they had exchanged views on what could be done to build on the Declaration and to

bring the parties back to three-stranded talks; officials of both Governments were working on the ground-work in this regard. As regards the Declaration, he would reiterate that there were no deadlines and that nobody had a veto over progress. He would also make clear that the EP elections would also not have a "veto".

The Secretary of State said that, if asked about McGuinness' reference to the "Unionist veto", he would reply that the underlying point here seemed to be an unwillingness to accept the democratic principle of consent.

Quiginn suggested the line might be that "nobody has a veto but both Governments are working for overall consent". (Note: The Secretary of State did not, in the event, use this line).



David Donoghue

7 March 1994