



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Confidential

Discussion with Mr. Seamus Mallon, M.P.

The following were the main points to arise in discussion with Seamus Mallon on the evening of 7 February:

Joint Declaration etc.

- he is convinced that Adams cannot deliver on the Declaration. There is a hard core of opposition within the Republican movement which is not going to be won round in the foreseeable future. Adams is not in a position to overrule this faction.
- it is essential notwithstanding the Sinn Fein response that the Declaration remains at the heart of any new efforts to reach a political settlement. It must not be allowed to be seen as a message addressed exclusively, or even mainly, to Sinn Fein. He fully acknowledged that the Taoiseach and Tánaiste have clearly signalled their intentions in this regard.
- he reiterated, as we know, that he had advised Mrs. Kennedy-Smyth against granting a visa to Gerry Adams.
- his concern in the aftermath of the visit was that Adams would be seen as the nationalist hero who had bested the British Government, and its diplomatic and media establishment. While people in the Republic could separate their understandable satisfaction at British discomfiture from political support for Sinn Fein, the situation in the North was far more problematic.
- the European elections will provide the first test. Sinn Fein will market itself as the "peace" party, best placed to exert political pressure on the British Government and build on the openings provided by the Declaration.
- Sinn Fein have nominated 3 candidates for the election, not in the hope of winning a seat, but with a view to

maximizing the total party vote.

- he makes no bones of his determination to nail Sinn Fein on the inconsistency between their current stance on "consent" and the Hume/Adams document. He had told that morning's Pat Kenny radio programme that a number of journalists had copies of the Hume/Adams document, and was clearly unfazed by a subsequent complaint from his party leader. (He had heard that Hume read out the text of the document at the week-end EP elections convention).
- referring to his criticism of Adams in the Commons during Question Time, which was seized on by the Prime Minister, he was at pains to claim that this had provided an opportunity in which, having secured the attention of the House, he could insist - referring to that day's FT interview with Mayhew - that "the two Governments jointly pursue the objectives of the Declaration and that there will be no unilateral deviation from it...."
- clearly unwilling to accept any suggestion that he has broken ranks, he recalled numerous times in recent months when for the sake of the party he had to defend positions on which he was not briefed and of which he did not approve.
- he wanted no more "surprises". Any future initiative must be the subject of appropriate prior consultation.
- he therefore welcomed the intention to have an early meeting with the Government, although did not want this to coincide with Hume's planned visit with Bloody Sunday relatives on 16 February (he mentioned the Carahers and other lethal force cases from his own area).

Select Committee

- the British Government Chief Whip Richard Ryder had contacted Hume about the Select Committee during his

Washington visit. While Mallon said he did not have the full picture he understood that the figures given by Ryder were: UUP - 2, DUP - 1, SDLP - 1 and Kilfedder. Allowing for at least 2 Labour members, and a Government majority this suggests a 15-strong Committee.

- Mallon thought Kilfedder the likely choice as Chairman
- he was adamant that he would not take the SDLP seat

Boundary Commission

- the objectives of the British Government in the redistribution were clear: ensure PSF could not get elected and put in place a framework for early Assembly elections, thereby placating Molyneaux
- in retrospect the SDLP's own submission of July 1993 to the Boundary Commission had not been particularly helpful: by urging 3 seats only for Belfast and recommending (somewhat implausibly) that Craigavon be split they had contributed to the mess in which they now find themselves
- work is already in hand jointly with Eddie McGrady's constituency team on submissions to the Assistant Commissioners (AC) who will carry out the public enquiries. The preparation of these detailed briefs is a major undertaking for the small staff available, given the deadline for completion of 28 February
- while he noted the inclusion on the panel of ACs of some sympathetic figures, he was not optimistic that they would break precedent by recommending other than minor adjustments
- he was appreciative of the strong stand taken on the matter by the Tánaiste at the Conference and of the assurance that we would continue to press the issue with

the British side

- his annoyance at the Commission's report is compounded by the fact that one of its three members, George Duffy is a Newry businessman whom Mallon has supported for appointment to other public bodies. Duffy has denied to him that there was any element of political calculation in the Commission's work

Police Authority

- notwithstanding the obvious deficiencies of the Police Authority, Mallon sees the proposed changes as undermining the Hunt Report reforms aimed at ensuring the independence of the police from political control
- regarding the party's refusal to put forward nominees for the Authority, he recalled that many years ago they had unsuccessfully proposed Belfast solicitor Kit Napier. The word from the NIO was that he was "too nationalist"; the SDLP declined to have anything more to do with the Authority.
- In the late 1980s at a function in Hillsborough the Chief Constable Hugh Annesley, in the company of Mawhinney and other NIO junior ministers, urged Mallon to reconsider the party line. Mallon met the challenge by offering himself to serve on the Authority. He has since found it convenient, if the issue is raised, to refer to the lack of response to this offer.
- pending clarification of the SOS's intentions Mallon has instructed party Councillors not to act on a letter seeking nominations for membership of the body which takes office in June 1994 (the NIO made a belated effort last week to win him over by sending Chris McCabe to see him on the issue, but to little effect).

PH
P. Hennessy
9 February, 1994