



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/96/4

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

Meeting between the Taoiseach and Tanaiste
and the SDLP
Government Buildings -- 5 September, 1994

Present: Taoiseach, Tanaiste, Dr. M. Mansergh and the undersigned.

SDLP: Messrs. Hume, Mallon, Hendron. (Mr. McGrady was absent in Canada).

1. After welcoming the delegation, the Taoiseach turned to the proposed Forum. He supplied the SDLP with draft terms of reference, to be submitted to parties. Mallon thought it would be important to avoid fuelling the "pan nationalist" smear. The Taoiseach thought Alderdice's involvement was helpful in that respect. Hume thought that would work out at the end of the day. There were two broad traditions, but ten or eleven parties, and therefore it would be easy to work between the two traditions.
2. The Tanaiste objected the Forum could not do that if one tradition did not turn up. Hume thought the Forum objective should be to break down barriers with the unionists and to build agreement. They should adopt the principles of the last Forum, to tie in the Southern parties. These could be looked at to see if they needed modernisation. Hendron thought if Molyneaux agreed to join the proposed unionist Forum there might be dialogue between the two. Hume thought it would be useful to use Presbyterian language: a covenant of honour.
3. Mallon felt the Forum's real purpose was to get Sinn Féin quickly into the political process. The Taoiseach and Tanaiste agreed. Hume pointed out the process should

however also be real.

4. Hendron said the attitude to the announcement in West Belfast was totally encouraging. Hume said the same applied in unionist areas. He had received countless messages. The Taoiseach warmly praised the contribution which the SDLP had made to the process. The Tanaiste felt it was now very important to avoid the kind of triumphalism which had appeared recently on the media. There was no point in securing one side and losing the other. Hendron agreed.
5. Mallon thought the Sinn Fein activists would now "go for broke" against the SDLP. This was happening already. "Mallon is a Brit" graffiti were reappearing. The people who asserted the constitutional politics over the past 25 years should not be let down. Adams was trying to hijack the policing issue. The Taoiseach felt that policing should be settled as part of the outcome of overall negotiations. Hume recalled his traditional position, that policing failure was due to the absence of agreement, and not to the police themselves. He felt it would be important for the British to remove border blockages as of now.
6. Hendron recalled Adams and Hartley were "shouting about no-go areas". He was pleased to have police protection in the nationalist areas. Adams' henchmen were dangerous and unsavoury.
7. The Taoiseach asked about the loyalist paramilitaries. It was assumed they did not have the same discipline as on the nationalist side. Hendron thought there was more coherence in the UVF than in the UFF, which was the UDA. After the hideous Monaghan murder, he had got many calls to say the unionist people were totally disgusted. That had been done by the 'Ohio Street club'. He had informed the police. He wished journalists would take their bearings from

representative groups, for example a church congregation, rather than from paramilitary dens. However he believed unionists would not allow the paramilitaries to continue, because it was so obvious they were destroying the union. Hume recalled Carson's prophesy that the last struggle would be between loyalists and the British Government. Mallon thought that there was a "hidden hand" behind the loyalist paramilitaries, whose murders were efficiently conducted. The unionist community were deeply hurt that Sinn Fein were now presented as harbingers of peace.

8. The Taoiseach wondered whether the unforthcoming position of the British Government was dictated by internal politics. He had tried to make clear that there was no deal, but had been told that his efforts were not being helpful. Mallon thought that the logic of everything that was being done was some form of internal and North-South bodies. Had anybody asked Sinn Fein whether they would participate in those? The Taoiseach said the Government had made abundantly clear that the Framework Document was not for negotiation. Mallon repeated that Adams would never be able to sell an outcome which was broadly similar to what the despised SDLP had achieved in 1973. Dr. Mansergh thought the notion of an interim settlement was broadly accepted, and when the high constitutional matters were abstracted, the Sinn Fein position was not so different from the SDLP on questions of parity of esteem, etc. The Taoiseach said the fundamental point was that if coercion was out, consent was in.

9. The meeting then turned to the draft terms of reference for the Forum which had been circulated. Mallon asked what new approaches to "serve economic interests" meant? It was pointed out that the language was from the Joint Declaration. The Taoiseach instanced the proposed West Belfast campus as an example. He had pushed that with Harold Mansergh approved warmly.

10. Mansergh wondered if a sentence should be added taking account of the principles of the New Ireland Forum. Hume thought that should not be put in the terms of reference, but done on day one.

11. Mallon asked what the timeframe was. The Taoiseach thought the Forum could sit for as long as necessary. Mid-October was a reasonable target for a launching date. Mallon thought the sooner the Framework Document was launched the better, so as to test Sinn Fein attitudes to political structures. The Taoiseach felt that even if the unionists were not ready to take part in talks involving Sinn Fein, they could be involved for bilaterals, etc., with the British Government after the publication of the document. Hume thought the main interest Sinn Fein would have in bilaterals with the British would be to talk about prisoners. Hendron thought that talk of amnesties, generosity, etc., was unhelpful in the present circumstances. The Taoiseach and Tanaiste said that no decision had been taken on this, and the issue was down the road.

12. The Taoiseach asked about the INLA. Hendron strongly suspected that some INLA murders had been a flag of convenience for the IRA. The INLA indication that it would also have a ceasefire showed that they were following the IRA.

13. Hendron said that if there was funding from the United States, it should not be channelled through the IFI on the same terms of reference as heretofore. He was extremely annoyed about the way the IFI handed out money in West Belfast. Money was going to Sinn Fein front-organisations who employed only their own. McGinnis said that the amounts were small, compared to what was being given to

mainstream initiatives supported by Dr. Hendron, such as BCO etc. It was agreed this could be discussed further with Dr. Hendron. The Tanaiste thought there would be no additional US funding until things had been tied down. Clinton was also anxious to push a private sector contribution.

14. The Taoiseach asked about the likely calibre of Sinn Fein as political competitors in the new situation. Hume thought that not a single person would change their attitudes to Sinn Fein. Those who had always been opposed to violence would remain anti-provo. Mallon disagreed, saying there was a grey area between Sinn Fein and the SDLP. When violence stopped a substantial number of people would go in that direction. They would not be from the SDLP, but from the margins. As to how good they were, it varied from place to place. He predicted Sinn Fein would "up the ante" against the SDLP with demonstrations against British army bases, etc. The Tanaiste emphasised the need for Sinn Fein to give reassuring signals also.

15. A brief discussion followed on the closure of cross-border roads. Mallon stressed that the British could not win that one. If they used their power to seize machinery within a five mile radius, there would be uproar. The Tanaiste said he would take the issue up vigorously with the Secretary of State. Mallon asked what was to be done with the border bases. The Tanaiste suggested they might make interpretative centres!

16. The Taoiseach raised the question of the strength of party representation in the Forum. Dr. Mansergh suggested tentatively the figure of 10 for SDLP, 5 for Sinn Fein and 4 for Alliance. The Tanaiste considered that this implied large and unwieldy numbers in terms of the Southern parties. On the assumption that the proportions were broadly acceptable in terms of electoral strength it was agreed

that 5, 3 and 2 might be the preferable option. There was agreement also on the value of alternates, to allow the smaller parties to involve more of their numbers.

17. The meeting concluded with a discussion of press arrangements. After some degree of reluctance, Hume joined the Taoiseach and Tanaiste and his colleagues for a photocall and a brief press meeting on the steps of Government Buildings.
18. In margin of the meeting Hendron asked the Tanaiste to raise again the Kane/Timmons/Kelly case with the British.

Seán Ó hUiginn
6 September, 1994

Enc. 1

cc: PST
PSS
Mr. F. Murray
Dr. M. Mansergh
Mr. T. Dalton
Joint Secretary
Ambassador Small
Ambassador Gallagher

4. Draft Terms of Reference

The Forum for Peace and Reconciliation is being established by the Government for as long as is necessary to consult and examine ways in which lasting peace, stability and reconciliation can be established by agreement among all the people of Ireland, and on the steps required to remove the barriers of distrust, on a basis of promoting respect for the equal rights and identities of both traditions. It will also explore ways in which new approaches can be developed to serve economic interests common to both parts of Ireland, including in the framework of the European Union. It will be a fundamental guiding principle of the Peace Forum and of participation in it that all differences relating to the exercise of the right to self-determination of the people of Ireland will be resolved exclusively by peaceful and democratic means. The purpose of the Forum will be to assist in identifying and clarifying issues that may be the subject of full negotiation in all-party talks.