



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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PST  
PSS  
Mr F Murray  
Mr P Tealson  
Mr S Coulter  
Mr T Dalton

159/1  
Assessment  
you may wish to see  
JH 9/3/95

8 February 1995

Pages: 2 + 1

TO: HQ

FROM: BELFAST

FOR: SECOND SECRETARY O HUIGINN *8/2*

FROM: JOINT SECRETARY

Secretary of State's Meeting with Comber Orangemen

1. As you know, I expressed unease to Williams about this meeting on Monday morning and again when I saw reports that emerged on Monday evening and in Tuesday's newspapers. I attach a report from yesterday's News Letter.

2. I said there were signs that the Secretary of State's guests seemed to be misunderstanding the lie of the land. It would not be unusual for a professional politician in the UUP or DUP to blow smoke when they came out of Stormont Castle but this was unlikely to be true of the Comber Orangemen; what they said was likely to be what they heard. We could support the Secretary of State in trying to allay fears but we had an equal interest in ensuring that the unionist community, which we believed were more inclined to be pragmatic than their political leaders, would not misunderstand the strength of understanding between the Governments or feel misled when the JFD was published.

3. Williams gave me an initial comment to the effect that the Comber Orangemen had been greatly pleased to be invited to Stormont Castle, had been flattered by the Secretary of State's attentions, and had been generally reassured. He had seen the briefing note for the meeting which was, by his account, on lines unexceptionable to us. He has come back since with further remarks based on a summary report of the meeting. They are worth passing on to you as an indication of what the Secretary of State is saying to unionists at present:

*This presentation would create major problems for Hume + Adams.  
8/2*

- No internal solution would work, the whole process was three-stranded, but the primary object was an Assembly. The relationship between the Assembly and the North/South body would be for agreement. The British Government considered the territorial claim in the Irish Constitution to be an issue of key importance. The Anglo-Irish Agreement would be replaced as part of the overall package;
- Membership of the North/South body would be nominated democratically by the Assembly. The members would be the equivalent of Ministers;
- The North/South body would report to the Assembly and to the Oireachtas respectively. There was no question of the Assembly being subservient to the North/South body;

- There would be no over-arching Dublin/London machinery that would come automatically into play if the Assembly were to fail;
- There would be no kind of Dublin/London jurisdiction over the decision-making process of the North/South body;
- The functions of the body would have to be agreed; they would be based on common interest, mutual benefit, economies of scale and so on;
- The definition of executive powers was for the parties (the participants or the political parties?) to decide;
- There were no limits to what the Assembly could do "within transferred powers" but it was ultimately for the parties to decide what powers the Assembly should have.

4. I thanked Williams for this fuller and more candid account of the discussion but I said my concern remained. The British might have been underestimating the need for a fairly substantial catechism for use on both sides in meetings like this, even before publication of the JFD. For example, I could understand that the Secretary would stress to Unionists the importance of the setting up of an Assembly but he was tripping over himself if he used a phrase such as "the primary object is the establishment of an Assembly". That was not the understanding between the Governments. Nor would it appear in the JFD. What would appear in the JFD was: "The primary objective of both Governments in their approach to Northern Ireland is to promote and establish agreement among the people of Ireland, building on the Joint Declaration."

5. Second, where either Government considered that any institution, established as part of the overall accommodation, was not properly functioning within the Agreement, or that a breach of the Agreement had otherwise occurred, the Conference would consider the position on a basis of shared commitment to arrive at a common position. If the Assembly failed and direct rule were reinstated, the Irish Government would resume the power to put forward views and proposals on transferred matters; and other measures would be taken to ensure that North/South cooperation was maintained.

6. Third, while it was true that all of the matters in the document were for discussion and agreement, it would be unwise to single out any particular matter for agreement because that could well be taken to mean that the British Government was prepared to see those particular provisions of the JFD watered down. I expressed particular concern about the reference to defining executive in relation to powers for the North/South body.

cc: Ambassador London

# 'New Assembly will hold Ulster's fate'

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● Orange Order delegation 'reasonably pleased' with Mayhew meeting

A NEW Stormont Assembly will decide the extent to which Dublin will influence life in Northern Ireland, the Government has said.

Secretary of State Sir Patrick Mayhew told an Orange Order delegation that the shape and extent of powers enjoyed by cross border institutions will be up to members of a newly-elected assembly.

David McNarry, a member of the group from Comber District, said he was "reasonably happy" with what he heard during the 90-minute meeting at Stormont Castle.

"There is nothing to kick-start a political process in Northern Ireland unless it is to be driven by co-operation in a new Northern Ireland Assembly," he said.

"All things hinge on the formation of an Assembly and hinge on its power."

He said he had asked Sir Patrick if he stood by comments he made during a speech to Comber District last September when he said nothing would be imposed upon the people of Northern Ireland unless it was agreed by locally elected representatives.

In effect, he said, any proposals put forward by Dublin via cross border bodies, would have to be agreed and adopted by the Assembly.

By RICHARD SULLIVAN

"He told us that the new Assembly would be autonomous and authoritative and would have the full support and backing of Parliament at Westminster."

He said Sir Patrick underlined that it would be for Northern Ireland to "interconnect" with Dublin if that was what the Province wanted.

"By no means could Dublin interfere or compel the Northern Ireland Assembly to engage in discussions on a subject it didn't want to discuss."

Sir Patrick also stressed that there would be no "appeal mechanism" for Dublin should they be unhappy at decisions taken by the Assembly.

The Comber Orange Order delegation requested the meeting before last week's revelations in the Times about the contents of the framework document.

Mr McNarry, a member of the Ulster Unionist Charter Group, said the Secretary of State indicated that the Times report was "somewhat wide of the mark" but when challenged refused to be drawn on the question

of his resignation if the framework document drew the Province toward a united Ireland.

"He told us it would be silly for Government to publish a document it was prepared to stand over and which they did not think could be agreed. He said he was aware of the strength of feeling in unionist circles and details of leaks were published last week."

The Secretary of State indicated that the Government was pressing for change in articles two and three of Eire's constitution and that it viewed any future agreement as a success to the Anglo Eire agreement.

"The primary objective is the establishment of an Assembly and he said it would be set up as part of an agreement to replace the Anglo Eire Agreement. An agreement which will be agreed on an alternative to the Secretariat."

"My gut reaction is that he is sincere. I know if he is lying to us we will be coming after him."

The Stormont Castle meeting followed a series of meetings hosted by Comber District in the last year.

Speakers have included the Rev Ian Paisley and Peter Robinson, Alliance leader, John Alderdice, and Sir Patrick. Jim Molyneux is considering an invitation to speak.

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