

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2022/84/45
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.

To Whelan
21.10.99

58, 59

Secret

Meeting with Mr Ken Maginnis

The Taoiseach accompanied by the undersigned met Mr Ken Maginnis at 10 a.m. this morning for nearly an hour and a half. He was accompanied by Mr David Campbell and Mr David Lavery. (Ken Maginnis was down for a Trinity College Historical debate, on the motion approving or otherwise 'no guns, no government' in which Dr Garret FitzGerald, Dr Joe Hendron, Mr Gerry McGeough of SF and the undersigned also participated).

Mr Ken Maginnis said he had become pessimistic, while the Taoiseach spoke of improved relationships, but unfortunately not a great deal more substance.

Maginnis claimed the Republican body language had deteriorated since last week. While Martin McGuinness was still comfortable, he felt that Gerry Adams and Gerry Kelly were not. He had tried to draw them away from political tallying to address the moral aspect. He had asked if there could be some clarification of the terms of the mandate given to SF, which they acknowledged they had from the Republican Movement. Last week, they had seemed interested in getting a paper rom Unionists, but not this week. SF had

©TSCH/2022/84/45

produced a paper, and tweaked it a bit after discussion, but David Trimble had said he couldn't go with it.

Maginnis said Unionists were coming under some pressure to go for some kind of holding operation, to set up committees chaired by Ministers Designate. They were opposed to this. McCartney was accusing Unionists of being willing to allow institutions to be set up, with the Executive being pulled down when the IRA didn't decommission, leaving the North-South and other institutions in place, in other words leaving a new version of the '85 Agreement. He asked the Taoiseach what he made of this, and he invited me to reply. I said the main institutions were very explicitly described as interdependent in the Agreement, and I could not see this as a real scenario. Maginnis said it would be very helpful if McCartney could be clearly refuted.

The Taoiseach said he felt Sinn Féin had not reached its bottom line. Their position was to set up the Executive, leave the arms issue to de Chastelain, and they would do their level best to persuade the IRA. But this provided 'damned all certainty'. He had asked Martin McGuinness, could they not show their hand to one person, and set out what would happen, providing certainty and clarity, as repeated yesterday in Mandelson's speech. Somebody had to know what they would do other than their very best.

©TSCH/2022/84/45

The Taoiseach then briefed Ken Maginnis on recent Garda security operations. He saw the 'Real IRA' as primarily motivated by hatred of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. Ken Maginnis wondered about the role of Martin Ferris and Pat Doherty, but the Taoiseach said that Martin Ferris' main priority at this point was getting elected in North Kerry. He said the 'Real IRA' consisted of three sets of people:

a) those who had left the Movement a long time ago.

b) somewhat more recent defectors.

c) new people.

There was no one of very recent Provo origin being picked up. Finding new people enabled the Gardaí to trace new connections. In Sligo, the RIRA had successfully confronted the Provos, which was a sinister development. Ken Maginnis expressed concern about the progress of the new organisation towards establishment of ASUs.

©TSCH/2022/84/45

There was a brief discussion of Martin Galvin. The American difficulty Maginnis stated, was that he was not outlawed here, and that was because he was an Irish citizen. The Taoiseach said he would nearly prefer it, if the SF leadership were more concerned about the dissidents. The Garda had arrested two full units. The quicker business was done the better, otherwise the RIRA will get stronger.

Maginnis felt there had been two missed opportunities, immediately after the referendum, and immediately after Omagh. The Taoiseach outlined his strenuous efforts post-Omagh to persuade them of this.

David
~~Peter~~ Lavery said as a non-political observer he saw three routes to clarity and certainty:

- defining the scope of the SF mandate.
- a P. O'Neill statement separately or together with a SF one
- a private indication, given also to a third party.

The Taoiseach said he did not believe there would be a public statement from the IRA. But he believed they were prepared to do something, and it was not reasonable for them not to tell somebody. Adams, McGuinness and others

©TSCH/2022/84/45

know what the Army Council could deliver. He believed they could be pushed a little. It was not enough to say they would come back when an Executive was set up, and they would be generous. Unionists needed to know in advance, even if not necessarily in a fully public sense. Republicans had their fingers badly burnt in the two weeks of July.

Maginnis repeated what he said in Trinity that SF and Unionists should take a series of five steps each in parallel, which he specified for SF viz. the war is over; meaningful interface with de Chastelain; a starting date for decommissioning; its completion by May 2000; and cessation of all paramilitary activity (including knee capping etc).

In the absence of progress, the Taoiseach said, there was not likely to be a conscious return to war, but there would be a drift.

Ken Maginnis made it clear that one of his problems with the Patten Report was the proposed amalgamation of the Special Branch with the Crime Branch, particularly in view of the very close co-operation with the Gardaí. These were not the people who did the interviewing in Castlereagh, he claimed.

©TSCH/2022/84/45

The Taoiseach said there was no evidence of IRSP involvement with the RIRA, but they were involved in the drugs scene. Whatever moves were made following an agreement, dissidents would be crushed. But he also implied that with the Agreement working , support from decent people would flow back to the UUP. He felt Mitchell shouldn't withdraw from the scent too soon.

Ken Maginnis said the prisoner issue had loomed large for unionism and the police. The latter might ask why did they take risks, what did they die for, if it didn't yield progress on decommissioning.

The Taoiseach pointed out that SF had taken large steps by changing its constitution to go into the Assembly and sit in the Executive, 'partitionist institutions'. There was a draft statement where they were prepared to condemn all violence and punishment beating. A lot of things were improving. At three functions in the past 24 hours, the establishment of the Equality Authority, an ICMSA dinner and the Auditors Body, the North had been well represented. He was not asking for the Executive to be set up on a never-never-basis, He still believed what he had said in the Sunday Times earlier this year.

©TSCH/2022/84/45

Lavery reported he didn't see how Trimble could go into an Executive in the absence of visible certainty, which could be provided by de Chastelain perhaps.

Mr Maginnis said the process should be staggered on each side.

There was a brief discussion of Portadown, and the Taosieach explained that Padraic White was trying to assist Brendan McCionnaitha into the economic agenda.

The Taoiseach concluded by saying that for SF there was always a little bit in reserve in the last few days. SF never revealed their bottom line till the last possible moment. He used the phrase 'within days or weeks' to describe the general ballpark.

21 October 1999.

©TSCH/2022/84/45