

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives

Reference Code:	2022/47/228
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

AMBASÁID NA hÉIREANN
AN AFRAIC THEAS

EMBASSY OF IRELAND
SOUTH AFRICA

54 Keerom Street, CAPE TOWN 8001
Phone Office: (021)-230431 and FAX: (021)-230433
Phone Home: (021)-7941441 and FAX: (021)-7941443

Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin
10 May 1998

Meeting with Mr Valli Moosa Minister of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development with British High Commissioner at Cape Town on

At my suggestion, the British High Commissioner Ms Maeve Fort asked for a meeting with the Minister of Provincial and Constitutional Affairs Mr Valli Moosa who received us in his office in Cape Town on Thursday 7 May. The purpose of the meeting was to be briefed on the activities of the ANC delegation that visited Northern Ireland and Dublin in the period Tuesday 28 April to Friday 1 May and to show a united front on the Belfast Agreement. The delegation was made up of Mr Valli Moosa, Mr MAC Maharaj, Minister of Transport, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa (former chief ANC negotiator in the negotiations with the then National Party Government) and Mr Mathews Phosa, Premier of the Northern Province and Legal Advisor to the ANC.

The ANC press announcement of the visit stated that it came at the invitation of Sinn Fein and the British Labour Party. This was untrue and only Sinn Fein were involved.

The Minister said that in Belfast he had been received by Sinn Fein who had made all the arrangements. He had contacted Mr David Trimble, who had attended the Arniston discussions last May in Cape Town, but Mr Trimble had had to go to London. Later he spoke again to Mr Trimble who said that it was perhaps as well that they should not meet at that time in view of the fact that the ANC delegation had come under Sinn Fein auspices.

As to the Belfast Agreement, Mr Moosa said that the more he studied it the more he was convinced that it was a good agreement.

Mr Moosa had visited the Republican prisoners in Long Kesh. He felt that the response to the prisoner released provisions in the Agreement was positive.

Mr Moosa had met with Mr Paul Murray at Stormont. He had discussed:
(A) "qualifying" prisoners (Republican and Loyalist Paramilitaries) after release: how should they be rehabilitated into society?
(B) Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries who were still at large.
And
(C) Paramilitaries who might be accused of crimes after the Agreement came into effect.

The rehabilitation of former paramilitaries (which included counselling) was very important. The South African experience had been mixed. But undoubtedly some former of the former liberation (i.e"non-statutory) force members had been most unhappy with their treatment and had joined gangs and other illegal groups.

©DFA/2022/47/228

In Dublin, Mr Moosa had met with the Taoiseach, Mr B. Ahearne and with the MOS at Foreign Affairs Ms Liz O Donnell. The main impression he had come away with from the two meetings was concern at the outcome of the referendums North and South.

After the Minister had spoken, the British High Commissioner Ms Fort referred to the radio interview by the Northern Province Premier Mr Mathes Phosa in which he had adopted a very simplistic stance (i.e. end of British colonialism in Ireland and withdrawal). This interview is referred to in the attached extract from the Cape Town Sunday Argus of 3 May.

I mentioned the part played by John Hume and the SDLP over thirty years in the constructing of the Agreement. I asked if the ANC had any contact with the SDLP and was told no. I pointed out that the Agreement was a vindication of Mr Hume's non-violent policies and that the SDLP retained a majority of the support of the nationalist community.

I said however that the ANC contact with Sinn Fein was timely coming as it did before the resumed Sinn Fein Ard Fheis in Dublin on 10 May 1998 and before the referendums.

Towards the end of the meeting Minister Moosa mentioned decommissioning, quoting General Viljoen (Leader of the Afrikaner "Freedom Front" party in Parliament) as saying that decommissioning is not a real issue, in view of the availability of weapons (see also the Sunday Argos article where Minister Moosa is quoted as saying much the same).

Obviously, the more reflective members of the ANC Executive (such as Valli Moosa) know that the visit to Ireland should have been better prepared. In today's Sunday Independent, there is an article reporting that Minister Valli Moosa as saying that a delegation made up of members of Northern Ireland Protestant parties is expected to visit South Africa in the next few months. The delegation is to look at "the integration of the former liberation armies with the South African Defence forms, talk to former political prisoners and study their reintegration into their communities and it would also looks at South Africa's counselling strategies for former political prisoners.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (who was ill and was represented by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad) in his budget speech on 7 May in Parliament in Cape town referred to Northern Ireland as follows:
"South Africa's consistent support for the peace process in Northern Ireland needs to be mentioned. We believe that the visit to South Africa by all the major political payers in Northern Ireland in 1997 during which South Africa shared its experiences with them, made a constructive contribution to the peace process"...

The reference here was to the Arniston Conference last May at which nine of the parties to the peace process were present. That conference was organised by the SA Government as opposed to the ANC.

Eamon O Tuathail

©DFA/2022/47/228