

THE LEADERS OF THE 2 MAIN UNIONIST PARTIES HAVE CALLED ON THE PRIME MINISTER TO HOLD A REFERENDUM IN NI ON ANY ANGLO-IRISH DEAL AND AFTER AN HOUR LONG MEETING AT DOWNING STREET THIS MORNING JAMES MOLYNEAUX AND IAN PAISLEY SAID MRS THATCHER TOLD THEM THAT SHE WOULD STAND BY HER REJECTION OF THE NEW IRELAND FORUM REPORT. FROM LONDON HERE IS OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, DENIS MURRAY:-

'JIM MOLYNEAUX DESCRIBED THIS MORNING'S MEETING AS FRUITFUL WHILE IAN PAISLEY CALLED IT VERY HELPFUL. IT'S THE SECOND MEETING THE 2 OF THEM HAVE HAD WITH MRS THATCHER IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS ON THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS. THEY GAVE HER A 7-PAGE DOCUMENT WHICH SPELLS OUT THE CURRENT UNIONIST POSITION: ANGER AT UNIONISTS BEING KEPT IN THE DARK AT THE CONTENT OF THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS: THE ASSERTION THAT A CONSULTATIVE ROLE FOR THE REPUBLIC WOULD BE AN INFRINGEMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY AND A CASE FOR ANY AGREEMENT TO BE PUT TO A REFERENDUM IN THE PROVINCE - A CASE WHICH THE DOCUMENT CALLS 'UNANSWERABLE'. THE 2 PARTY LEADERS ALSO VERBALLY PUT THESE POINTS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IAN PAISLEY TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE AFTER THE MEETING THAT IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY HAD A CHANCE TO PUT THE UNIONIST CASE TO THE PRIME MINISTER - A CASE WHICH JIM MOLYNEAUX SAID HAD BEEN MISREPRESENTED IN BRITAIN. BUT DID THE PRIME MINISTER GIVE THEM ANY DETAILS ON THE CONTENT OF THE TALKS?:-

JIM MOLYNEAUX:

NO. BEYOND THE ASSURANCE THAT NOTHING IN THE AGREEMENT WILL INFRINGE IN ANY WAY BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY OVER NI BUT WE OF COURSE HAD TO POINT OUT TO HER THAT GIVING A STRUCTURED ROLE OF CONSULTATION TO ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY WOULD TO A GREAT EXTENT CONTRADICT THAT AND WE WENT INTO SOME FAIRLY FINE LEGAL DETAILS ON THAT AND SHE UNDERTOOK TO EXAMINE THOSE VERY CAREFULLY BECAUSE THAT SEEMED TO ME TO BE ONE OF THE MANY THINGS ON WHICH SHE DID PAY DETAILED ATTENTION.

IAN PAISLEY:

SHE ALSO RE-EMPHASISED THAT HER 'OUT, OUT, OUT' SPEECH STOOD.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE, TOM KING, SAID AFTER THE MEETING THAT THE TALKS HAD BEEN FRUITFUL AND THAT THE 2 UNIONIST LEADERS HAD INDEED BEEN ASSURED BY THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THERE WOULD BE NO INFRINGEMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY IN ANY ANGLO-IRISH DEAL AND HE SAID SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD NOT BE AN ALTERNATIVE TO DEVOLUTION WITHIN NI.'

THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IS TO RESPOND TO ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE KINCORA SEX SCANDAL MADE BY FORMER ARMY OFFICER, COLIN WALLACE. WALLACE, WHO IS PRESENTLY SERVING A 10-YEAR JAIL SENTENCE FOR MANSLAUGHTER, WAS IN THE EARLY 70S EMPLOYED AT ARMY HEADQUARTERS IN LISBURN AS INFORMATION AND PRESS OFFICER BUT IT'S WIDELY BELIEVED HE HAD INTELLIGENCE LINKS.

... PLANS FOR SWITCHING GAS-USERS TO OTHER FUELS. OUR INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT SAYS AN EARLY STATEMENT IS EXPECTED FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISMISSING THE CRITICISMS. THE COUNCIL WARNED THAT HOUSEHOLDERS COULD DIE IF CONVERSIONS WERE NOT DONE PROPERLY BUT OUR CORRESPONDENT SAYS THE OFFICIAL VIEW IS THAT A VERY LARGE NUMBER OF CONVERSIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE WITHOUT PROBLEMS ARISING.

THE LEADERS OF THE 2 MAIN UNIONIST PARTIES HAVE HAD AN HOUR OF TALKS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER IN LONDON THIS MORNING. JIM MOLYNEAUX OF THE OFFICIAL UNIONISTS AND IAN PAISLEY OF THE DUP MET MRS THATCHER AT 10 DOWNING STREET. THE SECRETARY OF STATE, TOM KING, WAS ALSO PRESENT. AFTERWARDS THE 2 PARTY LEADERS DESCRIBED THE TALKS AS HELPFUL AND FRUITFUL AND WE'LL BE HEARING FROM DR PAISLEY AND MR MOLYNEAUX IN A MOMENT.

(FOR FULL TEXT OF SECRETARY OF STATE'S STATEMENT PLEASE CONTACT NIO (L))

LATER AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AT WESTMINSTER MR MOLYNEAUX AND DR PAISLEY SPOKE TO REPORTERS. HERE'S WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY. FIRST, JIM MOLYNEAUX:-

WE BOTH FELT THAT SHE HAD GIVEN A GREAT DEAL OF INTENSIVE STUDY TO POINTS WHICH WE PUT TO HER JOINTLY AT OUR MEETING AT THE END OF AUGUST AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN THE CORRESPONDENCE WHICH WE HAVE EXCHANGED OF WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN COPIES OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND I THINK THAT IT'S TRUE TO SAY THAT WE FOR OUR PART THIS MORNING DID OUR BEST TO PROVIDE WHAT WE HOPED WAS A USEFUL CLARIFICATION OF MANY OF THE POINTS AT ISSUE AND WENT OVER SOME OF THE GROUND ALREADY COVERED. AS A RESULT WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE BRITISH PARTICIPANTS IN THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS WILL NOW BE MUCH BETTER EQUIPPED TO REPRESENT UNITED KINGDOM INTERESTS.

IAN PAISLEY:

I THINK I MIGHT ADD TO THAT SIMPLY THAT IT WAS OUR PURPOSE TO PRESENT TO HER AS QUICKLY AS WE COULD BUT AS POWERFULLY AS WE COULD THE UNIONIST POSITION BECAUSE THE UNIONIST POSITION HAS BEEN GREATLY MISREPRESENTED. LET ME SAY WE ARE NOT AGAINST LONDON AND DUBLIN TALKING AS ANY GOVERNMENTS MIGHT TALK TOGETHER BUT WE ARE TOTALLY AGAINST PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM BEING PICKED OUT AND STRUCTURES BROUGHT INTO OPERATION WHEREBY THE SOUTH OF IRELAND IS GOING TO HAVE A CONSULTATIVE ROLE IN THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF NI THAT IS A DIMINUTION OF SOVEREIGNTY AND IS SOMETHING THAT WE CANNOT WEAR AND WE DID REMIND HER OF THE DOWNING STREET DECLARATION OF AUGUST 1969 THAT THE UK GOVERNMENT AGAIN AFFIRMED THAT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR AFFAIRS IN NI IS ENTIRELY A MATTER OF DOMESTIC JURISDICTION AND THAT IS WHERE WE STAND AND THAT IS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S OWN DECLARATION AND FROM THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO HAVE ANY DEVIATION AND THAT WAS THE MESSAGE THAT WE SPELT LOUDLY AND CLEARLY TODAY TO THE PRIME MINISTER AT DOWNING STREET.

IAN PAISLEY AND BEFORE THAT JIM MOLYNEAUX, STATING THE UNIONIST CASE IN LONDON TODAY BUT HOW SUCCESSFUL WAS THIS MORNING'S MEETING AS FAR AS THE UNIONIST LEADERS ARE CONCERNED? THAT'S A QUESTION I PUT TO OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, DENIS MURRAY:-

THEY SEEM TO THINK IT WAS VERY USEFUL. IAN PAISLEY TOLD US AT THE NEWS CONFERENCE IN WESTMINSTER AFTER THE MEETING THAT HE FELT IT WAS THE VERY FIRST TIME THAT THE 2 OF THEM HAD HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PUT THE UNIONIST CASE TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IT SEEMS THAT THEY DID MOST OF THE TALKING - THAT SHE REACTED TO ONE OR 2 POINTS - BUT EVENTUALLY SHE LISTENED TO WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY AND THEY SEEMED TO THINK IT WAS VERY USEFUL. ONE JOURNALIST ASKED THE 2 UNIONIST LEADERS IF THEY WERE REASSURED OR MORE WORRIED AFTER THE MEETING AND THEY KIND OF HEDGED AROUND THE ANSWER REALLY. THEY SAID THEY WOULD BE REASSURED WHEN THEY SAW THE ANGLO-IRISH DEAL OR NO ANGLO-IRISH DEAL AND WHAT IT CONTAINED BUT I THINK THAT THE GENERAL FEELING OF THEM WAS THAT THEY WERE QUITE PLEASED THE WAY THE MEETING HAD GONE.

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE DOCUMENT - THEIR CASE THAT THEY PRESENTED TO MRS THATCHER - WHAT WAS IN THAT?

A: WELL IN FACT WHAT THEY ARE DOING IS ESSENTIALLY PUTTING THE CASE TO THE PRIME MINISTER WHICH WE'RE ALREADY AWARE OF. THEY EXPRESSED THEIR IRRITATION AT NOT KNOWING AT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE TALKS. THEY SAY THEY ARE THE PEOPLE MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED AND THEY DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT. THERE'S IRRITATION AT THE REPUBLIC'S TERRITORIAL CLAIM. THEY QUESTION THE VALUE OF MAKING A DEAL WITH DUBLIN AND REALLY IT'S A GOING OVER OF GROUND WHICH PEOPLE IN NI KNOW ALL ABOUT ALREADY BUT WHICH THE 2 LEADERS FELT THEY WANTED TO MAKE TO THE PRIME MINISTER BEFORE THEY WENT. THEY CALLED THE DOCUMENT A MEMO AND THAT'S REALLY WHAT IT IS. IT'S AN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS.

Q: DO YOU THINK IT'S MADE THE SORT OF IMPACT THEY REQUIRED IN DOWNING STREET?

A: VERY DIFFICULT TO TELL. WE'VE HEARD THE SECRETARY OF STATE TALKING THERE AND WE PRESSED HIM AS HARD AS WE COULD WHETHER ANYTHING WOULD CHANGE AND THE BALD ANSWER TO THAT QUITE OBVIOUSLY IS THAT NO THE ANGLO-IRISH TALKS ARE GOING TO GO ON AND IF THERE IS TO BE AGREEMENT THERE WILL BE AN AGREEMENT. ALL THAT WAS OFFERED TO THE UNIONIST LEADERS WAS A CLEAR ASSURANCE OR 2 CLEAR ASSURANCES - ONE THAT SOVEREIGNTY WOULD NOT BE INFRINGED AND SECONDLY THAT DECISION-MAKING WOULD STILL REST WITH THE NORTHERN IRELAND MINISTERS - WITH BRITISH MINISTERS ANSWERABLE TO PARLIAMENT BUT OBVIOUSLY THE PRIME MINISTER DIDN'T SAY I AM BOWLED OVER BY THE FORCE OF YOUR ARGUMENTS AND I AM NOW GOING TO BREAK OFF THE TALKS WITH THE REPUBLIC'S GOVERNMENT. QUITE CLEARLY THAT IS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN BUT CLEARLY THERE ARE GUARANTEES THERE FOR THE UNIONISTS. NOW AT THE NEWS CONFERENCE I ASKED BOTH OF THEM WHY THEY SEEMED TO REFUSE CONSISTENTLY TO ACCEPT SUCH ASSURANCES AND THEIR ANSWER TO THAT WAS THAT THERE IS A CLEAR DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE PRIME MINISTER OVER WHAT CONSTITUTES A BREACH OF SOVEREIGNTY. THEY ARGUE, AND THE DOCUMENT THEY HAVE LEFT WITH HER, ARGUES VERY STRONGLY THAT TO GIVE ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT - IN THIS CASE OBVIOUSLY THE REPUBLIC - MACHINERY THROUGH WHICH TO EXPRESS ITS OPINIONS TO GIVE A CONSULTATIVE ROLE IS CLEARLY AN INFRINGEMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY. THEY HAVE SAID THAT'S WHAT IT IS IN THEIR VIEW AND IF IT'S NOT IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S VIEW THEN THERE'S GOING TO BE A YAWNING GULF BETWEEN THEM. I THINK REALLY THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IS SO THAT THE UNIONIST LEADERS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUT THEIR CASE TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND PERHAPS AS WELL PARTICULARLY TO PUT IT TO THE BRITISH MEDIA. THERE WAS TREMENDOUS MEDIA INTEREST IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE THE 2 MEN GAVE AFTERWARDS. A CASE THAT PERHAPS THEY FEEL ISN'T PUT AS OFTEN AS IT MIGHT BE ON THE BRITISH MEDIA IN LONDON AND I THINK ALSO THEY FEEL THAT YESTERDAY'S DEVELOPMENT AT THE ASSEMBLY - THIS SIR FREDERICK CATHERWOOD DOCUMENT - IS AN IMPORTANT ARROW IN THEIR QUIVER IF YOU LIKE. IT MEANS THEY CAN GO TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND SAY LOOK WE ARE WORKING HARD TO TRY AND GET SOME FORM OF AGREEMENT WITHIN NI. WE ARE DOING OUR BIT', WILL YOU MEET US HALF WAY AND I THINK THEY PUT THAT TO HER AND THEY'VE USED THAT ARGUMENT TODAY BUT I CERTAINLY THINK FROM A PR POINT OF VIEW THE 2 LEADERS MUST REGARD TODAY'S VISIT AS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS.

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