

C O N F I D E N T I A L

FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
18 SEPTEMBER 1991

5582

510/9

19 SEP 1991

CENT SEC

cc: PS/SofS (B&L) - B
PS/Paymaster General (B&L) - B
PS/MofS (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Wood - B
Mr McNeill - B
Mr Petch - B
Mr Bell - B
Ms Lodge, SIL - T
Mr Archer, FCO (RID) - B
HMA Dublin - B

2da

Wm J. H. H. H. H. H.

MR D J R HILL - B

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH MR HUME: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Secretary of State had a brief (10 minutes) meeting with Mr Hume on the morning of Monday 16 September to discuss the way ahead on the Talks. Mr McNeill and I were also present.

2. The Secretary of State explained that he was not contemplating wholesale change to the approach to Talks. The sort of alteration he was contemplating related, for example, to the numbers in the room.

3. Mr Hume said that he had been told by the media that the Secretary of State had indicated that he was prepared to re-negotiate the whole process. He appreciated that this was not the case. In his view, the Talks should resume where they were left off. His experience was that the Unionist elements in the community wanted the Talks to continue. Thus this should not be too difficult for the Unionist leaders. While the Unionist business community had largely opted out of politics he was also receiving indications that they would like to see the Talks continued. If the two Governments were to announce another gap between two specified dates, it would in his view be impossible for the Unionist leaders to resist rejoining the Talks.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

12006/SOFS

C O N F I D E N T I A L

4. The Secretary of State said that opinion polls fully supported Mr Hume's view about the wishes of the wider public. However, the narrower Unionist community might not share the view that the performance of the Unionist leaders was inept. Rather, it might be that they regarded their leaders as having satisfactorily held a particular line. So if the Unionist leaders were offered talks on a take it or leave it basis they might not be in difficulty with their narrower community if they choose to leave it. That said, 40 people had been directly involved in the Talks, of whom a significant number would, in his view, think it worthwhile to restart.

5. Mr Hume recognised that the fewer people who were present at the negotiations, the more efficient the process would be, but excluding people at this stage would be very difficult. Perhaps the same numbers should be involved, only with fewer people in the room on each occasion. But the whole quarrel was out of date. The intensification of loyalist paramilitary activity was a source of considerable concern. They appeared more organised than had been the case previously. The Secretary of State interjected that this seemed to be particularly the case in the West of the Province. Mr Hume said that he wondered whether the loyalists were building a bargaining position. He had had three talks with the UDA leaders who were much more sensible about the politics of Northern Ireland than Unionist politicians. They were about to suggest proportional representation for all elections, according to [redacted] who was a member of the Ulster Loyalist Co-Ordinating Committee. The point needed to be made in public that increased violence was not the answer, as could be seen by what was happening in Yugoslavia. In fact it made the situation worse. The differences between the various communities in Northern Ireland had to be acknowledged, but could not be solved by this method. There was also a debate going on among the Provisionals about future strategy, but the way ahead on this was unclear.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

12006/SOFS

C O N F I D E N T I A L

6. The Secretary of State said that as this was only a short, informal meeting, he would be happy to meet at greater length with Mr Hume and his two Parliamentary colleagues. As a result of other commitments, a meeting would probably not be possible in the next two weeks, but he would be happy to meet after that.

Signed.

A J D PAWSON
PS/Secretary of State
OAB Extn 6462
18 September 1991

C O N F I D E N T I A L

12006/SOFS

CONFIDENTIAL

5397
13 SEP 91

FROM: M RODELL
CPL Division

13 September 1991

cc PS/Paymaster General (L&B)
PS/Minister of State (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
✓ PS/Mr Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Ledlie
Mr Alston o/r
Mr Cooke
Mr Dodds
Mr D J R Hill
Mr Archer, RID FCO
HMA Dublin

1. MR BROOKER (Agreed: David Brooker 13/9/91)
2. PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B)

13/9
as Mr Stapleton

MEETING WITH DR ALDERDICE: 16 SEPTEMBER 1991

1. The Secretary of State is to meet Dr Alderdice in Hillsborough Castle at 7.15pm on Monday 16 September. The purpose of this meeting will be:

- to confirm that Dr Alderdice and his party are willing to take part in fresh round-table talks;
- to invite the Alliance Party leader to share any reflections he may have on the first set of talks;
- to begin to register with Dr Alderdice that progress will only be possible if the Unionists can be manoeuvred into line; and
- to debrief him on the meeting of the IGC which took place on 13 September.

Signing up the Alliance Party

2. The Secretary of State might open the meeting by saying that now that the holiday season has ended he would like to take stock of where the political process has reached and to consider how best to

CONFIDENTIAL

SAM/CPL/11805