

*Roinn an Taoisigh  
Department of the Taoiseach*

**Northern Ireland Division**

**FAX COVER SHEET**

DATE: 13 June '96 TIME: 12:10

TO: Dr John Alderdice

FOR: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: Mr. W. Kirwan

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MESSAGE: Blocks of taoiseach's reply  
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QUESTION NOS: 5 TO 7

DÁIL QUESTIONS addressed to the Taoiseach  
by Deputy Mary Harney  
for ORAL ANSWER on Wednesday, 12th June, 1996.

QUESTION NO: 5

To ask the Taoiseach if he will report on the consultations, if any, he has had with the British Prime Minister since Tuesday, 4 June 1996.

- Mary Harney.

QUESTION NO: 6

To ask the Taoiseach if he will report on the opening of all-party negotiations in Northern Ireland on Monday, 10 June 1996.

- Mary Harney.

QUESTION NO: 7

To ask the Taoiseach if he will report on the consultations, if any, he has had with the parties in Northern Ireland since Tuesday, 4 June 1996.

- Mary Harney.

REPLY.

I propose to take Questions 5, 6 and 7 together.

I participated, with the British Prime Minister, in the formal launch of negotiations in Belfast on 10 June.

Copies of my address on this occasion have been laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

I believe that the two Governments have created a unique opportunity for all concerned to accomplish good for the people of this island and of our neighbouring island.

I was glad, as I trust were all members of this House, to learn that the negotiations took a significant step forward early this morning with agreement on an approach to resolving procedural difficulties. In my opening address, I called upon all concerned to enter the negotiations in a positive spirit. The agreement reached this morning gives solid ground for encouragement in this regard.

I am circulating, with this reply, the statement that issued from the negotiations, after the opening Plenary with Senator Mitchell in the Chair, which sets out this agreed approach.

I also understand that, as of this morning, the Democratic Unionist Party and the United Kingdom Unionist Party have been added to the list of participants who, in the context of the negotiations, confirmed their total and absolute commitment to the Mitchell Principles.

I look forward to agreement being reached among the participants on the rules of

procedure for the negotiations next week. Clearly, it is important to move to deal with the substantive issues at the earliest date.

In the meantime, I would call again on the IRA to restore unequivocally their ceasefire of August, 1994, thus enabling Sinn Féin to participate in what they have sought for so long, direct dialogue with all other relevant parties.

While in Belfast I had a discussion on European Union issues with the British Prime Minister. We discussed the BSE issue, the agenda for the Florence European Council, the priorities of the Irish Presidency, the Russian Presidential election and the situation in former Yugoslavia. We both agreed that every effort should be made to resolve the BSE issue prior to the European Council in Florence. I underlined that one of the priorities of the Irish Presidency will be action at European level on the drugs issue and I am pleased to report that the Prime Minister expressed support for this priority.

I have not had any formal consultations or discussions with the Northern Ireland parties since 4 June, 1996.

(Add Nos. 5, 6 and 7)

Mr. O'Malley: Given that the former Senator Mitchell has been confirmed by a majority of the parties as chairman, is the Taoiseach satisfied that his chairmanship is on a basis as originally proposed by the two Governments or have his powers been significantly diluted in order to get, in particular, the Ulster Unionist Party on board and to accept his chairmanship?

The Taoiseach: The former Senator Mitchell has assumed the chair and the participants are meeting to discuss procedural issues. Obviously they will address the role the chair will play in the context of those discussions.

Mr. O'Malley: I can only assume from what the Taoiseach has said that he does not agree with the proposition that there is a very distinct possibility that the powers of the former Senator Mitchell are diluted from what was originally intended, that they are not as full or as plenary as originally intended. In view of what happened in Adare last Friday and the failure of Sinn Féin to condemn that murder and the attempted murder associated with it, will the Taoiseach suspend discussions between his officials and Sinn Féin?

The Taoiseach: On the first part of the Deputy's question, it has always been the case that the talks will work on the basis of the parties being willing to agree. Last night the Government, in consultation with the other parties, made it clear that it recognises that ultimately agreement in procedural and all other issues in these negotiations is a matter for the participants. That was always

the case but the reassurance that it would remain the case was an important contributor in obtaining the agreement to proceed this morning. There is no change in the underlying reality that at the end of the day the participants must agree on what they are doing.

On the second part of the question, I have indicated my disgust in strongest terms at the attitude of the Vice President of Sinn Féin in his failure to condemn the killing of a member of the Garda in Adare. His statement that he is not involved in what he called the politics of condemnation is patently false. As has been demonstrated in the newspapers, the word "condemn" is frequently used by Sinn Féin in regard to all and sundry, including trivial matters it chooses to condemn. However, it would appear that it is not willing to condemn the killing of a member of the Garda, and that, quite frankly, disgusts me. I find it very difficult to understand the mentality of a party or individual who stood for the Dáil who cannot bring himself to condemn the killing which occurred in Adare. This causes me deep unease. However, I have worked a long time, as have others, in achieving a situation where there can be an IRA ceasefire and Sinn Féin can participate in the political process and I would not lightly abandon any course which could be constructive in that regard.

There are no plans at present for any discussions at official level with Sinn Féin. It is now a matter for Sinn Féin to make up its mind to go to the IRA and ask it to call a ceasefire. It is as simple as that - it should go now and ask the IRA for a ceasefire. We have had enough violence in this land for long enough and it achieves nothing and never achieved anything. When one looked at the bereaved family in Limerick, what they have suffered and the suffering they will

carry with them to the end of their lives and reflect on the fact that 3,000 other families have gone through the same experience thanks to campaigns of paramilitary violence, surely it is time for even the most hard hearted and cynical person in politics to realise that violence achieves nothing, contributes nothing and should be stopped once and for all.

Mr. B. Aherm: On behalf of Fianna Fail, I welcome the eventual instalment of the former Senator Mitchell as chairman in the early hours of the morning. However, the spectacle over the past few days has not been very encouraging, but I will leave that issue in the hope that matters will improve when the talks begin on the more substantive agenda.

Will the Taoiseach clarify how the plenary session works vis-a-vis the strands which deal with the North-South dimension? Does it work like a normal committee where a subcommittee under General de Chastelain would report back to the plenary session chaired by Senator Mitchell or will it be handled in another way? We all would like to see the IRA ceasefire restored immediately, particularly after the events which took place in Adare last Friday.

Section Y follows

## DAIL EIREANN

3,20

12 June 1996

Add Nos. 5, 6 and 7

Are we to take it from what the Taoiseach says that at this stage no Government officials are engaged in trying to assist Sinn Féin to bring its thinking to a conclusion in trying to convince the IRA to reinstate its ceasefire?

The Taoiseach: To the best of my knowledge no official meetings of any kind are planned at present but I have indicated no definitive view in regard to any request that might be received beyond saying that it is plain that it is now time for Sinn Féin to make up its mind. They have been provided with extensive consultation and information in the lead up to the talks that commenced on Monday last. Every question they asked was answered. At this stage we need no further procrastination. The appropriate course now for Sinn Féin is to take the decision to go to the IRA and ask the IRA to reinstate its ceasefire. As I have said, we have seen more than enough violence on this island for there to be no further procrastination in this matter. If people cannot see that violence should stop now, they have a problem in understanding the feelings of the Irish people. The Irish people clearly want this to stop and no organisation has any right to continue in the face of the clear opinion of the Irish people on this matter.



As far as the other issue is concerned, if the Deputy has questions about these matters, some of which are quite important, technical ones, I suggest that he table them separately. My understanding is that they will be reporting to the plenary on strand II issues, as they will be on other aspects of the discussions, regularly. As I understand it also, this is set out in the ground rules paper but, if there is any matter on which the Deputy wants further information, if he will table separate questions, these will be answered by the Taoiseach or me.

Mr. O'Malley: While welcoming what the Taoiseach has said, that there are no meetings taking place between Government officials and Sinn Féin, nor is any planned, would he go slightly further and say that all such discussions are suspended until such time as there is a condemnation of the events in Adare on Friday last and the reinstatement of the ceasefire by the Provisional IRA?

The Taoiseach: I have not received any and am not aware of any request for a meeting. Obviously, I would not want to make a decision on any such request until I saw the terms in which it was couched. It is important that we maintain some margin for discretion to ensure that anything that can reasonably be done in respect of the principles to which a civilised Government must adhere - is done to achieve a reinstatement of the ceasefire.

As I have already said to Deputies Bertie Ahern and O'Malley, I believe all questions Sinn Féin might wish to put have already been put and answered comprehensively. It is now a matter for them to make up their minds to go to the IRA on the matter. I cannot envisage exactly what request I might receive

or its nature. Therefore, I do not want to make categorical statements without any possibility of qualification at this juncture. I am sure Deputy O'Malley understands that.

Mr. O'Malley: Do I understand the Taoiseach's position to be that he does not wish any such talks to take place between officials and Sinn Féin? While I understand the need at times for what the Taoiseach called discretion to be exercised, Detective gardai McCabe and O'Sullivan did not get much opportunity to exercise any discretion on Friday morning last.

The Taoiseach: I do not think the Deputy needs to remind me of that. I know very well what happened and do not consider I require any enlightenment on the part of the Deputy. However, the position is that I have been working, as did my predecessor, on what is a difficult task, that of having a ceasefire reinstated by an organisation which, without any justification, has used violence over the past 25 or 27 years. It is not something that is particularly easy to do, to engage in the consultations that are necessary, to get the necessary decision but, at the same time, it is important to make the point that, without contact, without offering some information as to what might be available if there is a reinstatement of the ceasefire, it is less likely that a reinstatement of the ceasefire will be obtained. That is a practical consideration the Deputy will understand. As far as I am concerned, I have authorised my officials to make available any information sought or that is reasonable. I believe all that was done prior to Monday last, 10 June. Unfortunately, Sinn Féin did not go to the

IRA prior to 10 June but a relatively short time has passed. They can still do so; I hope they do so; I asked them to do so; they have all the information they need to do so but I am not going to rule out, without qualification or any possibility of discretion, any accession to any conceivable request I might receive for further information or contact. I will look at any such request on its merits. But I have to say I find it quite appalling that Mr. Pat Doherty was unable to condemn the killing of a detective garda in Adare; I find it appalling that a man who was willing, had he been successful, to take his seat in this House - a House that is guarded by members of the Garda Síochána - could not use the words "I condemn" in regard to the killing of a member of the Garda Síochána. I find that deeply troubling; I find it particularly troubling as I am someone who sat in the same room on many occasions with the same Mr. Doherty and passed many pleasant conversations with him during the time that the IRA ceasefire was in place. Therefore, I find it all the more upsetting that he could not say the words "I condemn" in regard to this matter. In saying that I believe I share the feelings of every Member of this House, of all parties.

Mr. D. Ahern: We on this side of the House appreciate more than most the difficult position in which any Government will have found itself in recent years in regard to contacts with persons on both sides of the political divide, sometimes not so political divide.

On a separate matter - in regard to the all-party negotiations and the three-stranded process - would the Taoiseach say whether the maxim used at the very start of these talks, from the early 1990s on - that nothing is agreed

until everything is agreed - still applies?

In regard to the three strands, when it is possible that parties may frustrate progress on one strand and not on others, would the Taoiseach confirm yet again that it is the position of his Government and of the British Government that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed?

The Taoiseach: I do not wish to open up questions here into an *ex tempore* interpretation of the ground rules document or of all the other documents available as forming the basis for these talks. However, my understanding is that no agreement can be reached, other than a comprehensive one, because it is a comprehensive agreement alone that can be put to the people North and South prior to implementation. Obviously, one has to have the entire package before one can do that. As far as the way in which the talks will proceed, in practice there may well be contingent agreements on various topics as we go along, contingent on other things being agreed subsequently. In the nature of any discussion, that is the way one proceeds, that certain issues are dealt with, left in place, or agreed contingently as people proceed to deal with something else.

Section Z follows.

## DÁIL ÉIREANN

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12 June 1996

Nothing is implemented until an overall package is agreed and put to the people. That is the way I understand it will work. If the Deputy wants to put down questions on the specific nature of paragraphs of the ground rules for these talks, he should do so and answers will be provided.

Mr. D. Ahern: Are the ground rules cast in stone?

An Ceann Comhairle: That concludes questions to the Taoiseach today. We now proceed to deal with questions nominated for priority.