



SECRET AND PERSONAL
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Soles
Copy
Destroyed
15/18

JEN/B/11/7/41128

Roderic Lyne Esq CMG
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street

15 November 1993

Dear Roderic,

JOINT DECLARATION: MEETING WITH ARCHBISHOP EAMES

As foreshadowed in my letter to you of 12 November, the Secretary of State met Archbishop Eames at Hillsborough Castle on Saturday 13 November.

Summary

Archbishop Eames confirmed that almost all of the additional text in the latest Irish draft was provided by him. While he had told the Taoiseach that, as a result, the latest draft was an improvement, he had pointed to further improvements which still needed to be made. He did not recognise Irish descriptions of him as being "enthusiastic" or "happy with" this latest draft. He agreed to go back to the Taoiseach to correct this misunderstanding and to press him for further improvements on the constitutional guarantee and on Articles 2 and 3. He offered to show the resulting text to Mr Molyneaux.

The Archbishop was anxious that no report of what he told the Secretary of State should reach the Irish Government before he had himself had an opportunity to speak to the Taoiseach.

Detail

The Secretary of State summarised the Government's approach to the Joint Declaration Initiative so far. The Irish Government believed there was an opportunity to secure a total cessation of violence through the means of a joint declaration by which the two Governments would set out certain principles which - although we were told the recent texts had not been shown to the Provisional IRA - would enable them to declare an end to violence. The British Government had undertaken to consider this approach but had consistently pointed out various shortcomings, including the absence of an explicit reference to the constitutional guarantee. We had shown the text to Mr Molyneaux and formed the view that it would not be acceptable to unionists, more because of its language than its substance. The Irish Government were told this conclusion before the Brussels meeting, at which it had been agreed that it was necessary to draw a line under the Hume/Adams dialogue and to continue to pursue the talks process. The Irish Government had subsequently sent a revised text this week, which they claimed incorporated passages provided by Archbishop Eames which would make the text acceptable to unionists. It had been discussed between officials on Wednesday: the Irish had taken away the mistaken view that we had no further interest in the initiative. In fact, British officials had said they would look at this revised text with care, but had emphasised the need to consider its acceptability and the importance of avoiding any taint from Hume/Adams.

The Archbishop said that he had been to see the Taoiseach on three occasions: he had only done so on the basis of the Taoiseach's assurance that the British Government had no objection to his involvement. He had been shown various texts (but not allowed to keep them) and as a result had suggested some phrases which might help to make the draft more acceptable to unionists. When shown JD13, the Archbishop confirmed that paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 were as he had drafted. In putting this language to the Taoiseach, he had emphasised that unless the Irish Government were prepared to say

that they would amend Articles 2 and 3, there would be nothing new in the text for unionists. (Indeed, the text he provided had included a reference to 'removing' Articles 2 and 3 in square brackets: but the Taoiseach had said this was 'unsaleable' and preferred the milder version.) He had also emphasised that the initiative had to be pursued in parallel with the political talks, although the Taoiseach had claimed there was no prospect of a breakthrough in those.

The Archbishop said that the Taoiseach had asked him whether the latest text was an improvement. In reply, he had said he hoped it would be more acceptable, but the bottom line was what the Irish were prepared to do on Articles 2 and 3. (This was a personal view: he had deliberately distanced himself from Mr Molyneux and not discussed these texts with anyone else.) He had told Mr Reynolds that he should not assume that the latest draft was the best possible and that there was still more work to do on it. He had not said that he would be prepared to support the text, although he would of course be prepared to support the language he had drafted himself.

Assessing Reynolds' personal involvement, the Archbishop said he thought he was building much on his personal gut instinct that there was a genuine opportunity for peace, on the strength of his friendship with the Prime Minister, and on his conviction that an end to violence could be delivered. The Archbishop had asked the Taoiseach what in particular in the latest draft would deliver an end to violence. The Taoiseach had emphasised paragraph 10 and the role of the Irish Convention, which he had explained as a "waiting room", a means by which Sinn Fein could be brought into the political process. The Taoiseach had said it would not meet regularly but would provide a fall-back in case of trouble. The Archbishop said he did not understand the role of the Irish Convention: was it, for example, an all-Ireland institution for expressing and addressing grievances? Was Mr Molyneux seriously

expected to go to Dublin to participate in such a body? If so, this could shatter the whole of the initiative (but it was unclear whether the Archbishop had put this view to the Taoiseach).

Turning to others involved in Dublin, the Archbishop said that Mr Spring was worried that he was not being told everything. He was a thoughtful, sincere man but quite capable of going along with something and then pulling the plug on it. Martin Mansergh was generally helpful and would be prepared to go further, for example on the constitutional guarantee, but had his hands tied by opinion in Fianna Fail.

The Secretary of State said that it was most valuable that the Taoiseach had been able to have the benefit of the Archbishop's advice. As to substance, we were satisfied that, with the addition of an explicit reference to the constitutional guarantee and more positive language about Articles 2 and 3, the Joint Declaration did not conflict with any fundamental principles. But we still had to apply the test of whether it was likely to be acceptable, in particular to unionists. There was no point in ending the violence from the republican side, in such a way that it only provoked loyalist violence. That was why we had concluded an earlier draft could not be proceeded with and, in a meeting between British and Irish officials that week, had pointed to the difficulties which still existed. It was clear that the Irish had misinterpreted this as a signal that we were not interested in pursuing the initiative further: we had endeavoured to correct that. For our part, however, we were dismayed that the Irish Government had gone cold on the political talks which, in some statements, it seemed they no longer saw as a complementary process. The paramilitaries could not be given a veto on the political talks. Far from the British Government being tardy, it was the Irish Government which had taken some months to respond to our latest paper on the political talks: it was now clear they were withholding this response as a lever to secure a more positive attitude towards the Joint Declaration Initiative.

As to the proposed Irish Convention, the Secretary of State said that our understanding was that it was a talking shop. All parties in the island of Ireland would be invited, but they clearly could not be compelled to go. It had no jurisdiction and no constitutional function.

The Archbishop said that he was worried Mr Reynolds was in unpredictable mood: he could quite easily remove the references to the British Government and publish the text as it stood. Mr Reynolds had said to him "what more does Mr Molyneaux want?".

The Archbishop said that he was surprised, and worried, by the confidence the Taoiseach had that the Provisional IRA would end violence. Certainly they were the key, because loyalist terrorism would peter out if the Provisional IRA ceased. But loyalists were not interested in peace at any cost. Recent UDA comments had referred back to the earlier "Common Sense" document and had talked up the importance of Articles 2 and 3. It was possible that the loyalists had deliberately stirred up trouble in the Maze Prison in order to turn attention away from peace feelers. The Archbishop asked if there was still a role for him: could he have "one more go" with the Taoiseach to try and achieve more acceptable language?

The Secretary of State said that we had been told that the Archbishop believed the present text was acceptable to unionists and was prepared to speak up for it. If that was not the case, it would be very helpful if the Archbishop would tell the Irish Government so. The text could clearly still be improved upon, in particular we would want to see an explicit reference to the constitutional guarantee to the effect that any change in the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom would come about only with the consent of the majority of its people. It would also be helpful if the Irish Government were prepared to say that they "would" change Articles 2 and 3 in the event of an overall political settlement. Whether the Irish Government would accept an explicit reference to

the constitutional guarantee would be a critical test. We had earlier been told that such a reference was "unsaleable": if so, then it was clear that there was a fudge on the fundamental constitutional issue and this might be the ground on which we would have to part.

The Archbishop said that he would nail the notion that he had approved the latest text. The first time he had been shown a draft he had despaired. He hoped the latest text, with his own additions, was nonetheless an improvement. He had not seen the importance of adding a reference to the constitutional guarantee, but took the point now. He undertook to talk to the Taoiseach again and to come back to us. If and when we considered the time right to sound out Mr Molyneaux, he would be happy to talk to him.

The Secretary of State thanked the Archbishop, confirmed that his additions had indeed improved the text and took note of his offer to talk to Mr Molyneaux. At his request, the Archbishop took away a copy of JD13 to work on.

A copy goes to John Sawers and Melanie Leech.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Beeton

pp.

J A STEPHENS