

SECRET AND PERSONAL



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From the Private Secretary

30 November 1993

cc PS/SofS (L+B)
PS/Michael Ancram (L+B)
PS/PVS (L) Mr Cooke
PS/Mr Fell Mr Maccabe
Mr Thomas Mr Rickard
Mr Devereall Mr Beeton
Mr Williams

John Jonathan

MEETING BETWEEN THE TANAISTE AND
UNIONIST REPRESENTATIVES

THE INFORMATION IN THIS LETTER WAS PROVIDED BY MR JAMES MOLYNEAUX IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE. IT SHOULD BE PROTECTED VERY CLOSELY AND MUST NOT BE QUOTED TO THIRD PARTIES.

I am recording separately the discussion which Mr Michael Ancram MP and I had with Mr Molyneaux this morning about the Joint Declaration.

At the beginning of our meeting, Mr Molyneaux said that he wanted to "come clean" on one piece of information, but requested that it should be treated very privately. This was that on Sunday last, 28 November, Mr Ken Maginnis MP and the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Reg Empey, had been to Dublin for a meeting with the Tanaiste. Significantly, Sean o hUiggin had been present: ie, Spring was not free-lancing. I believe that Spring's political adviser, Finlay, was not there.

Spring had said that the "Brits out" formula was no longer a runner: there was no attempt now to seek language about the eventual British withdrawal.

o hUiggin had put forward a thesis that the Irish Government was in a much stronger position domestically than a year ago. The implication was that the present Government was well placed to take difficult decisions affecting the North.

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The Irish side had apparently conducted the discussion on the basis of the British draft Joint Declaration. They had affected surprise that Maginnis and Empey had not been briefed on this by their leader. Molyneaux saw this as another example of the Irish being careless with documents. Spring had evidently discussed a number of points deriving from the text, though Molyneaux seemed to think that the text had not been passed around the table. Spring had been probing for Unionist reactions to various proposals. He seemed also to have tried to build in some wording about the value of a united Ireland.

Through his visitors, Spring had passed an invitation to Molyneaux to see him in Dublin before the end of this week. Molyneaux did not intend to take this up. He had no wish to be drawn into pre-Summit negotiations.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

MR HUME

Yours truly,

Roderic Lyne

I spoke to John Hume (Derry) late last night. I asked him how he was: he sounded a bit mournful but said that he was coming along 'so so'.

2. He told me he had deliberately stayed away from the House of Commons for yesterday's Statement on the grounds that his presence might have provoked not only the Government but some members of the DUP into what might have been inflammatory statements which could have damaged the Government's position on the search for peace. He had gone out of his way to ensure that Mr Kevin McNamara did not attack the Government. He had been sorry therefore that the Secretary of State had made a party point in answering Mr McNamara but I said that I knew the two had had a word outside the Chamber to avoid any misunderstanding. I said that the way Mr McNamara had spoken was not exactly free of sting and bite.

Jonathan Stephens Esq
Northern Ireland Office

He was very concerned indeed that the prospects for peace despite the Government's very strong stand and support around most of the House of Commons for it, was in danger of being lost. I said that the next step with the flurry about disclosure and the way was for the two Governments to return to their