

From: G R Archer
Republic of Ireland Dept

Date: 10 November 1993

cc:	PS/SOSNI	B
	PS/Michael Ancram	B
	PS/PUS	B
	PS/Mr Fell	B
	Mr Thomas	B
	Mr Williams	B
	Mr Bell	B
	Mr Watkins	B
	Mr Cooke	B
	Mr Maccabe	B
	Mr Rickard	B
	Mr Leach	B
	Mr Wood	B
	Mr Dodds	B
	Mr Caine	B
	Sir T Daunt	B
	HMA, Dublin	B

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Mr Brooker B

NORTHERN IRELAND: THE VIEW FROM DUBLIN

1. Mr Temple Morris MP spoke to me on the telephone this morning to let me know that he had seen the Tanaiste and the Taoiseach in Dublin yesterday. He had gone for a meeting with Mr Dermot Ahern the co-chairman of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body and had not expected to see Ministers.
2. Mr Spring had talked rather gloomily about the weekend Fianna Fail Ard Fheis. The difficulties confronting the Government had been compounded by the mood on the floor. The hatchets had already been out. He was himself being roundly criticised for the Irish treatment of John Hume and for the reference to Unionists in the six principles. He was not retreating on what he stood for but the groundswell of grass roots concern could not be ignored. He had tried to say something to reassure critics in a constituency speech.
3. The Taoiseach by contrast had seemed surprisingly optimistic. He had repeated much of what he has said in public. There was a mood for peace and a political opening which would not be there for long. He could not afford to wait while the Unionists were going round in circles about sitting down at a table. He was complimentary about John Hume but had said that it was now for the two Governments to take matters forward. The Irish would not succeed alone. He had the greatest confidence that John Major would respond appropriately.

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Mr Temple Morris said he was not asking what was going on between the two Governments but he hoped we were aware that the Taoiseach was apparently counting on the British going along with what he was trying to achieve. The Taoiseach had not been specific about what he was aiming for (I have the impression that at this point Mr Temple Morris may have been told a little more than he felt able to admit to me about Irish hopes) but had made clear that he expected support for "the process". Mr Temple Morris had the impression that were we to disappoint him there seemed to be every likelihood of problems between the two Governments.

5. I told Mr Temple Morris that I would report on what he had told me. It tallies very much with a part of what Mr Dew reported from Dublin today about his talk with Jim Downey. I took Mr Temple Morris through our own approach on standard lines referring to your Secretary of State's recent comments and the Brussels statement of support for political talks. Mr Temple Morris commented only that the Irish seemed to have little hope that talks would make early progress.

Comment

6. Mr Temple Morris' account of his discussion with the Taoiseach and Mr Dew's report from Dublin are disquieting. There is the possibility of considerable disagreement with the Irish about the way forward and a danger that in response to difficulties at his Ard Fheis, the Taoiseach might be tempted to reveal that there are differences.

7. The Irish have given no-one outside Government any hints that they have failed to respond to detailed ideas put to them for a framework proposal. The criticism of the Tanaiste's six principles on which their draft response might have been based could account for the continuing absence of a reply. With the Tanaiste absent in the United States for much of next week and the Taoiseach's other preoccupations, I am not optimistic about progress. But there is no reason why we should let them get away with claims that delays are now because of Unionist intransigence. Their own failure to respond is now central to the absence of further progress and I do not think we should mince words about this if Mr Thomas plans to speak to Mr O hUiginn in the next few days before he leaves for the United States with his Minister.

(signed)

G R Archer