

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

17 November 1993

- 1. cc PS/SofS (B)
- Michael Ancram (L+B)
- PS/PVS (L)
- PS/Mr Fell
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Devereux

- Mr Cooke - 20M Destroyed 23/1/94
- Mr Rickard
- ~~Mr Beeton~~
- Mr May

Dear Jonathan,

MEETING ON NORTHERN IRELAND, 17 NOVEMBER

The Prime Minister held an informal meeting on Northern Ireland on the afternoon of 17 November, for about an hour, with your Secretary of State, the Foreign Secretary, John Chilcot and Sir Robin Butler.

The meeting discussed the latest intelligence on the IRA, including the IRA's reactions to the Prime Minister's Guildhall speech and its views on the Hume/Adams initiative.

The Prime Minister then turned to the papers enclosed with your letter of 12 November. Sir Patrick Mayhew had described his meeting with Archbishop Eames, and the message subsequently received by you from Eames about amendments to JD13 which Eames had discussed with the Taoiseach.

It was agreed that there were considerable attractions in the idea of putting forward a text of our own for a joint statement or communique on the Dublin Summit, based on the draft at annex B to your letter. We would be better able to judge this when we knew more of the views of Eames and of James Molyneux, M.P. There was a risk that the Taoiseach might regard a British text as a delaying device, if he was convinced the leading Unionists were now prepared to acquiesce in his own text. On the other hand, it was argued that the Irish would see it as a positive sign for HMG, for the first time, to put forward a text of its own.

The meeting examined the draft joint statement in detail, and suggested a number of amendments. It was agreed that the NIO would produce a revised draft before the next ministerial meeting.

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This, as you know, will be a wider meeting of ministers at 0930 on Tuesday 23 November. I would be grateful if you could arrange for revised papers to be circulated to those attending it on 19 or 22 November. In addition to the amended text, it would be useful if you could set out points for discussion about the way ahead, identifying the tactical decisions which need to be made. One decision is whether we should seek a postponement of the Dublin Summit. At today's meeting it was felt that there would be advantages in having extra time for preparation, although this would need to be handled with care with the Irish Government.

A draft passage on Northern Ireland for the Prime Minister's use in tomorrow's Debate on the Address was circulated. You have since commented on it.

The meeting did not discuss the timing of the next visit to Northern Ireland by the Prime Minister. However, I had a word afterwards with Sir Patrick Mayhew and John Chilcot about this, and it was agreed that further thought should be given to the possibility of a visit over the Christmas period. This could well be influenced by developments on the political front. I should be grateful for your further advice when you can see the way ahead more clearly.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever,
Roderic Lyne
RODERIC LYNE

Jonathan Stephens Esq
Northern Ireland Office.

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