

SECRET AND PERSONAL



349/56/93

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

18 November 1993

Dear Jonathan,

CONVERSATION WITH MARTIN MANSERGH

As we agreed, and at the Prime Minister's request, I had a word on the telephone on 18 November with Martin Mansergh, Special Adviser to the Taoiseach.

We first discussed this afternoon's call on the Prime Minister by Archbishop Eames. I did not reveal that we already had the text of Eames's latest amendment to JD13. Mansergh conspicuously did not say that Eames was "very happy" with the text, or words to that effect. He took a more cautious line. There were bits of the text which the Archbishop would wish to discuss with the Prime Minister. Thereafter the Archbishop had it mind to pursue his discussions elsewhere (Mansergh implied that the Archbishop wanted to speak to Molyneaux after his meeting with the Prime Minister). In "broad terms" the Archbishop was being very helpful.

I said that, while there were many factors in play, the most important judgement we would have to make was whether a joint declaration was likely to be a viable way forward.

Mansergh again replied cautiously. While we were moving in a particular direction, the text could not be presented as an ultimatum to PIRA. One would "have to allow space for reasoned amendments". He expected that this would mainly be concentrated in paragraph 4. The Irish Government was very confident that PIRA wanted "to come to a situation of peace breaking out". The vibes so far were that the passages intended to offer balance to the Unionists were "not unacceptable".

Mansergh thus gave the impression that consultation with PIRA on the text was already taking place, although he was not explicit.

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I told Mansergh that the Prime Minister would make a further strong statement about Northern Ireland during The Queen's Speech Debate.

I then drew his attention to the article in today's Guardian. (He had not seen this, but reached for it as we spoke.) I said that we would face some very difficult decisions on the joint declaration proposal, and were not yet sure how they would come out. To have this form of speculation in the press added to our difficulties, and created an unhelpful atmosphere. This was especially true of the suggestion in the article, sourced on Dublin briefing, that "elements of the Hume-Adams package may still be alive within the two Governments' initiative". Our position was that we would consult Eames. We would also wish to take further soundings of Molyneaux (Mansergh agreed that this was important, and spoke of the central position occupied by Molyneaux - with no overtones that our consultation would be improper). I thought that it would not be possible to arrange for Ministerial discussion in the light of these consultations before the morning of Tuesday 23 November. We hoped thereafter to be in a position to send a substantive response to the Irish Government - thought I reiterated that we had many difficulties to overcome.

Commenting on my reference to the problems created by statements by Adams and others falsely claiming that we were in negotiation with the IRA, Mansergh said that the Taoiseach had been furious with Adams. After the first of Adams's two statements, Dublin had sent a rocket in his direction. Mansergh attributed what he claimed to be the more moderate tone of Adams's second statement to this intervention. (The "rocket" is further evidence of the continuing contact.)

Finally, I referred to the Taoiseach's visit to Londonderry tomorrow (your letter of 17 November). I said that I hoped that we could keep the expectations down rather than up.

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

*Yours etc,
Roderic*

RODERIC LYNE

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Northern Ireland Office.

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