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London SW1A 2AH

15 June 1993

Dear Coleridge,

Prime Minister's Talks with Mr Reynolds : 16 June

Mr Reynolds is to call on the Prime Minister at 1800 on 16 June for talks which will continue over dinner. A scene setting telegram (Annex E) and a list of talking points (Annex F) are attached.

ARRANGEMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

The Taoiseach would like a short tête à tête with the Prime Minister on arrival. (As agreed, the Foreign Secretary and the Northern Ireland Secretary will have separate discussions with the two Irish Ministers, Mr Dick Spring (Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and leader of the Labour Party), and Mrs Maire Geoghegan-Quinn (Minister for Justice)). At the plenary at 1830 the Irish Ministers will be joined by senior officials Mr Frank Murray (Secretary to the Government), Mr Noel Dorr (Secretary for Foreign Affairs), Mr Tim Dalton (Secretary for Justice), Mr Sean O'hUiginn (Anglo-Irish Division, DFA), and by the Irish Ambassador, Joseph Small. Personality notes on Mr Spring, Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn, and Mr Murray are attached (Annex D). Sir Robin Butler, Sir Rodric Braithwaite, Mr Chilcot (PUS, NIO), Sir Timothy Daunt (Deputy Under Secretary, FCO), Mr Blatherwick (HMA Dublin) and the Private Secretary will also be present for the plenary meeting.

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AGENDA

The Irish have agreed that talks should cover:

I EC Issues

This may include:

Economic Growth and Employment
Proposed Autumn European Council -
GATT
Openness
Subsidiarity
Enlargement
Structural Funds
Russia
Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

II Any other business

- Somalia in the context of peacekeeping
- Sudan

III Northern Ireland

- Political Development
- Cross Border Security Cooperation
- Extradition

The Foreign Secretary will need to leave for his ~~dinner~~ dinner engagement before 1930 when the plenary discussion is scheduled to end. The Prime Minister may wish to take EC questions and Other Business at the beginning of the plenary.

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EC ISSUES/SOMALIA/SUDAN

Detailed Briefing on the issues to be raised under Items I and II is at Annex A to this letter.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Likely to be the main subject of discussion. (The following paragraphs have been provided by the Northern Ireland Office.).

Irish Objectives

The Taoiseach will want our assessment of the prospects for talks and Unionist attitudes following the Northern Ireland elections. He may ask whether the DUP have finally signed off. The Irish remain ready to participate in the three strand process. But they are concerned that under Unionist pressure we may switch to pursuit of devolution or integration on a Unionist agenda. They are concerned that the consensus approach seems to be making no headway. The Taoiseach may again argue that the two Governments should devise a solution and try to take the parties with them. Hostile reactions to such an approach in 1985 have not deterred everyone on the Irish side from the misplaced hope that such a pre-cooked deal could be sold to the Unionists. In the meanwhile they have shown little sign of willingness to do more themselves to help to get new talks off the ground, although some work seems to be in hand on their ideas on substantive issues.

UK Objectives

Our objectives are:

- (i) to maintain public Irish support for the political Talks process until at least the Autumn, and their

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assistance over re-launching or developing Talks in some form.

- (ii) to emphasise that progress in Northern Ireland can only be made by consensus, and that any joint deal just between the two Governments will not win cross-party or cross-community support in Northern Ireland.
- (iii) to urge the importance of effective security co-operation, and of being seen to co-operate. To emphasise the significant contribution to the joint effort which could be made by improved intelligence gathering in the Republic.

Northern Ireland: Political Development

- (i) State of Play

Mr Molyneaux's UUP are bruised by their failure to do better in the 19 May elections. Mr Molyneaux is still committed to a Talks process which tackles all the key relationships. But he does not like the "high wire act" of eg large plenary meetings at Stormont. He would prefer to make progress on two levels: between the two governments, concentrating on Strand 3, Articles 2 and 3 and agreement not to pursue joint authority; and between the Northern Ireland parties (perhaps with an emphasis on low key social and economic issues, and bringing in non-politicians). But he will not have public substantive political talks with John Hume while the latter continues his talks with Gerry Adams.



John Hume's SDP continue to say that they will talk to anyone about anything. Mr Hume's meeting with Sir Patrick Mayhew on 9 June indicated that he might be prepared to be more flexible over his Strand 1 proposal for externally appointed commissioners, a sticking point where the SDLP gave no ground during the last round of the Talks. The Irish Government recently conceded privately at official level that this proposal could not win Unionist acceptance. There is no sign that Mr Hume plans to bring his talks with Gerry Adams to an early end: Mr Hume rejects any Unionist preconditions about this.

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ACT 2000

Dr John Alderdice's Alliance Party remain prepared to play a constructive role. But they can get fretful. When Round 2 of the Talks ended last November, they turned savagely on the SDLP for showing no movement. They have in the past called for HMG to produce a blueprint, and may do so again.

Dr Paisley's DUP did better in the 19 May elections than expected. His response has been to take a hard line on political development. He says he will not rejoin the Talks process unless he first gets satisfaction on Articles 2 and 3 from the Irish Government. At the moment he is even refusing to meet Sir Patrick Mayhew until he is sent a letter setting out what he regards as a satisfactory agenda. Sir Patrick Mayhew is making a further attempt to establish whether the DUP can be induced to play a role inside the process over the next phase. It would not be impossible to



proceed without the DUP, although the prospects of successfully delivering an agreed outcome would be much better if the DUP were signed up to it.

The Irish Government continues to be committed to the process, although some on the Irish side are gloomy about how much mileage there is left in it, and about any prospects for getting the participants back around a single table. On the other hand, they are beginning to work up and share their ideas on what an acceptable scheme would look like. On Strand 1 and Strand 2 they are encouragingly close to ours. They have said little so far about Strand 3. They may be prepared to mitigate their quest for constitutional balance if the new Strand 2 institutions had a sufficiently strong mandate. They still hanker after the two Governments working up together a joint scheme and attempting to sell this to the parties. But Dick Spring at least seems to have accepted at the last IGC that such an approach simply would not work with the Unionists, who would reject a joint scheme, irrespective of its contents, as a rerun of 1985.

The independent Opsahl Committee reported on 10 June, to a generally hostile reception from the Northern Ireland parties. Its recommendations included power-sharing; informal contact with Sinn Fein; and a special commission if Talks cannot be restarted.

Points to Make

In his tete-a-tete and in plenary discussion of political development, the Prime Minister might like to draw on the following points. They reflect Sir Patrick Mayhew's advice that the Prime Minister should aim to ensure that the Taoiseach remains fully bound into the Talks process and

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secure his agreement to a course over the next few weeks which determinedly develops constructive work and contacts while avoiding unrealistic commitments. Sir Patrick Mayhew would be happy in plenary to expand on his recent discussions with the parties:

- I am clear that we must determinedly pursue, and see if we can intensify, a Talks process which continues to address all the key relationships (not a Northern Ireland internal settlement in isolation) and involves the main constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland.

- I know that you, too, are committed to this. We cannot have a political vacuum. The terrorists would be the first to benefit. I continue to think that a US peace envoy would be at best ineffective and at worst counterproductive.

- The going has been difficult. The Northern Ireland Secretary is continuing his bilateral contacts with the Parties (and will give fuller details of these). The Ulster Unionists were discouraged by the local election results. Molyneaux still sees the objective of last years's talks as valid, but is not ready to get into a new round yet. Hume has confirmed his support for talks, but is pursuing his contacts with Adams. The Unionists will not join formal talks while these continue. Paisley has not yet agreed to a meeting, but we are pressing him to do so.

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- The British Government is faithful to the groundrules of 26 March 1991. We would certainly lose months if we tried to renegotiate them from scratch. But we know that Molyneaux is reluctant to return to what he calls "the high wire act". So we may need to be open to format changes.

- It is frankly uncertain whether we could succeed at the moment in getting everyone back around a single table, even if we both gave a push at Head of Government level. I think we should concentrate over the next few weeks on determined efforts to reinforce the process, encourage the parties to talk to each other more, and to do so more flexibly. It is certainly realistic to aim to get all the players back into negotiations.

- I am encouraged by the recent work between the British and Irish Governments on the substance of our own respective perceptions of possible overall outcomes which all would accept. It would be very valuable to continue this work. We are developing our ideas in the light of contacts with all participants. We particularly hope that the Irish side will be able to brief us about how they see such an outcome as fully as we have briefed you.

- While we can seek the maximum agreement between each other, it would be fatal to take the further step of working up a joint scheme.

- We know that, irrespective of its content, the Unionists would reject this as a rerun of 1985.



- I know that you look for "constitutional balance", but we have little room for manoeuvre. Both of us accept the consent criterion: ie Northern Ireland's position as part of the UK should only be changed with consent of the people living in NI. See no prospect of joint authority securing that Consent. Nor will HMG tilt to "join the ranks of the persuaders", by indicating a preference for a united Ireland. But the Talks process as a whole, including a continued IGC between us and strong North/South institutions with a wide and dynamic mandate, offers much to all.

- We plan to continue, and if possible intensify, our bilaterals with the parties. Michael Ancram will have an introductory round. Sir Patrick Mayhew will build on the work he has already done with the leaders.

- Both Governments should encourage greater contact between the parties. Jim Molyneaux, John Hume and John Alderdice have all indicated to Sir Patrick Mayhew that they would be prepared to talk to each other in private, and we should encourage this, although there are limits to how far this can go while John Hume is still in dialogue with Gerry Adams.

- As co-sponsor of the Talks process you could help in a number of ways:

- continuing to develop your own ideas on an overall outcome acceptable to all the participants

- encouraging the SDLP to be more flexible over externally selected commissioners and the Seamus Mallon security agenda

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- encouraging the SDLP to talk to the other parties and to the UUP in particular, and as fully as any continuing dialogue between John Hume and Gerry Adams allows

- continuing to reach out to the Unionists, including through going as far as you can in what you say about readiness to amend Articles 2 and 3 as part of the satisfactory overall package. It would have a considerable effect if you yourself could confirm what Dick Spring said about this in his speech of 5 March (extract in Annex).

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(iii) Public lines for the No 10 doorstep

The Irish side are still working up their proposed lines. (They do not want a formal communiqué.) The Prime Minister might aim to secure the Taoiseach's agreement to the following:

- the two Governments are determined that the Talks process with a comprehensive agenda and involving the main constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland should continue and develop over the coming period.
- Sir Ninian Stephen said on 10 November that the objectives of the Talks process were valid, and, in his view, achievable. This is still true. It continues to be vital to make political progress aimed at achieving a new start for all the main relationships.
- The groundrules of 26 March 1991 have served us well, but we need not be hidebound by details of format.
- The next phase will involve further bilateral contacts between the Talks participants to establish further common ground and the best way of developing the process. Real engagement on political progress is both possible and necessary.
- As part of this process, the two Governments will continue to work closely on matters of common interest between them such as the substance of Strand 3.



Defensive lines

- Mr Hume is the best placed person to judge whether continuation of his meetings with Gerry Adams is desirable in all the circumstances.
 - I hope the DUP will participate in the next phase. They contributed valuable ideas during the previous round of Talks.
 - We continue to want to see further round table Talks, but there can also be substantive political progress - eg through bilateral meetings - in the meantime.
 - We are continuing to develop our paper setting out the most fruitful areas for an acceptable overall outcome. Other participants are equally free to work up such proposals. We are happy to discuss our ideas with each and any of the other participants. But we will not finalise our paper without taking account of their further views.
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Security Cooperation

The Prime Minister might make the following points:

- Terrorism poses continuous challenge throughout these islands. Appreciate the considerable resources which Republic puts into countering it, but believe we must improve security co-operation even further.
- I discussed some specific proposals with Mr Haughey at the Summit in December 1991 and with you at our February 1992 meeting.



- The key requirement to defeat terrorism is better intelligence. For PIRA, this must clearly apply north and south of the Border. In the north, the RUC have had considerable - though certainly not total - success in this area. The way they are organised plays a big part in this. I believe it would be valuable for the Irish authorities to examine how the RUC are structured to obtain and exploit intelligence. I recognize the arguments against imposing an anti-terrorist squad on the existing Garda in the Border area. But there may well be subtler and less visible ways of achieving greater regional effectiveness:
- Know that the official group co-chaired by John Chilcot (PUS, NIO) and Timothy Dalton (Permanent Secretary, Department of Justice) is working through an important agenda of cross-border issues such as this and will meet again soon;
- The continuing work of this group demonstrates the very high priority we both give to improving security co-operation. Would like the group, as well as reporting to the Intergovernmental Conference, to come to us directly on any unresolved differences on security co-operation proposals. We could then discuss these when we meet.

Extradition

The Irish Government will shortly be introducing new legislation on extradition. The previous Government committed itself to legislate, following a Supreme Court judgement in November 1991.



The Court ruled that two IRA terrorists could claim the so-called "political defence" for offences of possession, as opposed to use, of arms and explosives, and the possession or use of semi-automatic, rather than automatic, firearms.

It seems, from informal contacts with Irish officials, that the legislation is likely to deal with a number of British concerns about current Irish extradition law. But the Irish have not yet formally told us how they propose to legislate. It does not, however, seem necessary for the Prime Minister to refer to the legislation, other than in general terms.

- Very pleased that the Irish Government will shortly be introducing legislation to deal with problems that have arisen in past extradition cases. Look forward to discussion of this: believe that officials are to meet soon. Grateful also for Irish assistance in recent cases, and the arrest of Ouinlivan and McCauley (IRA escapers from Brixton). We are at one in believing that terrorists should not be able to claim a political defence for their crimes.

I am copying this letter to Jonathan Stephens (Northern Ireland Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

Your ever,

(R J Sawers)
Private Secretary

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