

SECRET

48 (A-F)

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH MR REYNOLDS: 26 FEBRUARY

You are having talks with Mr Reynolds tomorrow for an hour at 1830 followed by a working supper.

Mr Reynolds, accompanied by Dermot Nally, will arrive at Downing Street at 1830. The rest of Mr Reynolds' team will go to the NIO and come on to No.10 at 1930. The Irish team is:

David Andrews (Minister of Foreign Affairs)
Padraig Flynn (Minister of Justice)
Dermot Nally (Secretary of Government)
Noel Dorr (Secretary of Foreign Affairs)
Joe Brosnan (Secretary of Justice)
Sean O'Huiginn (Head of Anglo-Irish Division DFA)
Joseph Small (Irish Ambassador)

Our team is:

Mr Brooke
Dr Mawhinney
Mr Garel-Jones
Sir Robin Butler
John Chilcott (Permanent Under-Secretary, NIO)
David Blatherwick (our Ambassador in Dublin)
Me

There is a massive FCO speaking note which you may want to read but will not want to stick to.

All the signs are that Mr Reynolds is feeling his way on Northern Ireland and David Blatherwick has advised against trying to pin him down to specific commitments at this stage. On the other hand, Mr Reynolds has just seen John Hume. He is therefore likely to be coming to the view:

SECRET

- (a) that the Northern Ireland All-Party talks will not work;
- (b) the two Governments should try to find a way through the problem;
- (c) that there may be scope for a joint statement by the two Governments of the kind proposed by John Hume (see separate NIO letter in the folder).

You will probably not reach substantial agreements at this first meeting but you will want to give a public signal of hope to Northern Ireland (and the mainland) that the two Governments are working closely together over the fight against terrorism and to promote a political solution. The Irish are keen that you and Mr Reynolds should go into the street at 1930 to speak to the press.

The brief suggests that you should try to secure Mr Reynolds' support for the three-stranded talks and not get side-tracked into other approaches, such as a meeting of the All Ireland Forum. But the fact is that the All-Party talks are bogged down. You asked the Northern Ireland politicians to meet privately to see if they could find a way of starting the talks. They have not yet done so, though there are suggestions that they may get together at the end of this week and agree to meet in two weeks' time (i.e. hoping to be let off the hook by the calling of a General Election). In the light of their procrastinations I do not think you should close your mind to other possibilities. You should, however, indicate to Mr Reynolds that we believe we should both try hard to make the all-party talks work before looking at alternatives.

The interesting telegram from Dublin (telegram no. 82) suggests that Mr Reynolds wants to encourage cooperation between people in the North and South, by-passing the politicians in the North. While I doubt if it is wholly possible to by-pass them the idea of encouraging cross-border cooperation between bodies such as the Institute of Directors, the CBI/Confederation of Irish Industry, is a good one and I think you should encourage it.

You might say to Mr Reynolds that we believe the three-stranded approach still has life in it and we should press the Northern Ireland politicians to take their responsibilities. The problem at the moment is that if they refuse to play ball then we revert to the status quo and there is no pressure on them to shift their ground. The more additional North/South cooperation there is seen to be therefore the better. You might want to ask Mr Reynolds whether he would consider holding one of your bilaterals in Northern Ireland. You might then have talks and then perhaps you could give a lunch to enable Mr Reynolds and his Ministers to meet leading Northern Ireland businessmen. Some Unionists would object but we must get away from the situation in which relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are less good than relations between any other two neighbouring states of the European Community. In other words, you should leave Mr Reynolds with the impression that, without in any way departing from the fundamentals of our policy, you are ready to look imaginatively at new ways of unblocking the impasse.

Mr Reynolds has said that Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution which constitute the Irish claim to Northern Ireland would be on the negotiating table as part of an overall negotiation. In turn, he has suggested that we might look at the Government of Ireland Act 1920. The Act refers to "the supreme authority of the UK Parliament over Ireland and every part thereof". In fact, this was disapplied from every part of Ireland except Northern Ireland by the Irish Free State Act of 1922. So the comparison is not really valid. There is a letter in the folder from Mr. Paisley asking you to raise Articles 2 and 3.

If Mr Reynolds talks about Mr Hume's idea of an Anglo-Irish statement on the future of Northern Ireland I think you should be very discouraging. It will be easier to kill the idea now, while Mr Reynolds is new, than to let it run and try to kill it in a few weeks' time. The evidence of the most recent Sinn Fein statements (and of the suggestions they have made to Mr Hume) is that Sinn Fein want the British Government to commit itself to the unification of Ireland. That is not on. You might say to

Mr Reynolds that as the weeks have gone on it has seemed to us that Sinn Fein are playing a cynical game. They are trying to give an air of spurious respectability while the campaign of terrorism gets worse. It may be that one or two, like Gerry Adams, have got battle fatigue but there is no evidence of a change of heart by the organisation. This is not therefore the route to go. (More detail is in the separate NIO letter in the folder.)

That is not to say that all the ideas in the draft are bad ones. You might say that you are thinking of making a speech in Northern Ireland (time and place yet to be decided) and will set out our views then.

Security

You may want to say to Mr Reynolds that security was a vexed issue between Mrs Thatcher and Mr Haughey. It became a point of principle for her that the Irish Government was not doing enough and a point of national pride for him that everything that could be done was being done. You might say that you want to try and treat the issue as any two partners would treat a common problem, but bearing in mind the particular sensitivities as well as the favourable impact in the North any improvements that can be made.

You will want to refer to the specific suggestions you put to Mr Haughey at your last meeting (details at pages 8-9 of the FCO brief). These were:

- (i) a common automatic fingerprint recognition computer system;
- (ii) a dedicated Garda anti-terrorist squad in the border areas;
- (iii) enhancement of the Garda covert surveillance capacity;
- (iv) direct army to Garda communications.

~~SECRET~~

E

Mr Reynolds has an opportunity to look at all this with a fresh mind. It would be helpful if he could do so and if we could work for specific improvements over the next couple of months.

Economic Co-operation

The brief suggests that you and Mr Reynolds should seek to announce the agreement of the two governments on the Belfast to Dublin rail link. The telegram from Dublin says that the Irish are not ready to make the announcement. You might refer to the project but I would not waste too much time on it.

It is also suggested that you should agree to announce the appointment of a new Irish Sea Science Co-ordinator. As our Ambassador has rightly said this is trivia. I have told the Foreign Office that Mr Garel-Jones should discuss this. It is not a matter for you.

EC Issues

The Irish will be very unsound on future financing because they have an interest in a large cohesion fund. You will want to explain our policy (page 14 of the brief). You may also want to explain the priorities for our presidency (future financing negotiations, single market, enlargement and CAP reform.

You will want to speak on standard lines about the GATT.

Handling of the talks

I suggest that, in your private meeting with Mr Reynolds you cover:

- your general approach to the problem of Northern Ireland including your recent talks with Northern Ireland leaders;
- the Hume proposal;
- security.

SECRET

SECRET

F

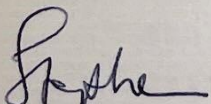
Over dinner you might like to invite Mr Brooke to talk about our approach to the three stranded talks and how he sees them developing. You might then go on to talk about EC matters.

Press

If you and Mr Reynolds go out into the street that removes the need for a Joint Communique. The obvious points you will wish to get across to the press are:

- commitment to work together in the framework of the Anglo-Irish agreement *and for the multi-party talks in N-Ireland.*
- desire to build on our close partnership in the European Community to promote peace and reconciliation. Whatever the political differences, day-to-day relations between North and South at all levels ought to be as close as befits two countries with a common border which are partners in the European Community;
- commitment to work together in the fight against terrorism. You have put forward specific suggestions.
- commitment to meet on a regular basis.

I suggest you look at the flagged folder, particularly A, which includes defensive briefing on points which Mr Reynolds may make and D which contains a summary of Mr Reynolds' views on Northern Ireland.



J.S. Wall

25 February 1992

c: Reynolds (MJ)

SECRET