

SECRET AND PERSONAL



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LONDON SW1A 2AA

PUS/  
30 NOV 1993  
M.I.G. LONDON

From the Private Secretary

29 November 1993

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER  
AND THE TAOISEACH, MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER

*Dear Jonathan,*

*dm ps for JD/ Mm. [Signature]*

**PRIME MINISTER'S TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH THE  
TAOISEACH, MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER**

In a separate letter, I have recorded the essential points from the Prime Minister's conversation with the Taoiseach today. You may find it useful to have the full record. This is enclosed. For obvious reasons, it should be given a very limited distribution.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever,  
Roderic*

**RODERIC LYNE**

*[Signature]*

- cc* PS/S of S (B)
- PS/Michael Ancram (4)
- dm* PS/PUS (4)
- sol/n* PS/Mr Fell
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Beverell
- Mr Cooke
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Rickard
- Mr Beeton

Jonathan Stephens, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

**TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER  
AND THE TAOISEACH, MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER**

The Prime Minister spoke to the Taoiseach from 1920 to 1957.

The Prime Minister said that he and the Taoiseach needed to get matters back in hand. We and the Irish had the same aims, but had differing perceptions of what was attainable.

The Taoiseach complained that we had no feeling for the importance of using the right language.

The Prime Minister said that he wanted to discuss the way ahead. We had not yet fixed the Summit date. He wanted to suggest that the Summit should take place on 3 December, and that the Taoiseach should put this to the Irish Cabinet on 30 November.

The Taoiseach said that the language in the Irish document was the type of language that could carry. The language in the British document did not have a hope in hell. The Prime Minister said that this depended on the audience. We had to address two audiences - Nationalist and Unionist. He had a mirror image problem over the Irish language. But the substance of the British document was similar to that of the Irish text. The Taoiseach denied this. Continuing, the Prime Minister said that he knew that the Unionists - not just

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Paisley - could not swallow the language in the Joint Declaration. (The Taoiseach disputed this.)

The Prime Minister said that we could only have one shot at this exercise. We needed to take three tricks: a cessation of violence by PIRA; Unionist acceptance and an absence of violence from their side; and acceptance by a majority of moderate people [in the UK]. The last of these three should be the least difficult. Nevertheless, by 3 December, in the present climate, he would not be able to persuade the Unionists, or a majority in Parliament to accept the Joint Declaration in its present form. He did not entirely rule this out for the longer term, but recent events had made the situation more difficult.

The Taoiseach said that he had felt that the real position with Molyneaux had been as described by Alderdice - i.e. that he would acquiesce in but not support the JD. However, Molyneaux was now taking the view that he wouldn't wear anything.

Earlier in the day the Taoiseach had met Rev. Magee, who had links with the paramilitaries. Magee had said that Paisley and his colleagues did not represent the views of the Loyalist paramilitaries, who were communicating through Magee. They had said that, so long as the basic constitutional position was not changed, there would be no back-lash. They could not accept self-determination for the whole Island or a rejection of the consent principle. In the Taoiseach's honest opinion, they would not quarrel with the Joint Declaration. But this was a long way from what the Prime Minister was being told.

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The Prime Minister said that the House of Commons had been generally supportive, and Molyneaux was trying to be helpful. However, the DUP was very hostile and some UUP members had also been hostile in the House. The end product was that the Unionists were not ready to accept a Joint Declaration this Friday.

The Taoiseach said that meant they would never accept it.

The Prime Minister did not agree that Friday was the time for make or break. There had been a large amount of progress over the past six weeks, well beyond expectations. He thought it would be sensible to meet on 3 December and consider then whether the Joint Declaration might run, and also to consider the alternative language which we had proposed.

The Taoiseach said that we should not jump to the conclusion that the Joint Declaration was not on. But the Irish Government could not accept our text. It was drafted in entirely the wrong way.

The Prime Minister suggested that these were points which he and the Taoiseach should discuss on 3 December. The alternative would be not to have a meeting. The Taoiseach said that he had been keeping an open mind. He had wanted to let the dust settle after the weekend and then take a decision.

The Prime Minister said that he and the Taoiseach should meet on 3 December, to explore each other's thinking. In the meantime, officials might discuss a possible outcome which would at least show that the process was moving forward - if necessary as two separate statements. There would be the option of

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holding a further meeting in the margins of the European Council. But he did not favour postponement, which would only raise expectations. He and the Taoiseach could make separate statements on the constitutional position, and agree that their joint work should continue. This would allow time for the dust to settle.

The Taoiseach said that a statement on these lines would fuse the peace initiative and the talks process. People would ask on 3 December if the peace initiative was dead. The Prime Minister said that he and the Taoiseach could buy some more time so long as they showed they were continuing to work together. Summing up thus far, the Prime Minister said that on 30 November we should announce a 3 December Summit; we should take care not to raise expectations; it could be a long meeting to clear minds on the Joint Declaration and so on; he and the Taoiseach could consider what they might say jointly and separately; and officials could meet beforehand in London or Dublin to make preparations.

The Taoiseach said that he had been working for six months on the Joint Declaration. Our excuses did not stand up. The House of Commons seemed to have stood fairly firm during the day. The Prime Minister said that the climate would be determined by the reactions of Unionists in Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach said that the Joint Declaration would never run if this was the case.

The Prime Minister said that he would like more time to talk to the Unionists. They had moved forward, but the document leaked by the IRA had been another setback.

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The Taoiseach said that the leak had not come from the IRA. The Prime Minister disagreed. It had not come from us. He thought it was the product of internal divisions in the IRA.

The Prime Minister said he was not prepared to give up on the Unionists. It was his responsibility to take the decision. It would be suicidal to throw away the work already done by getting it wrong. The Taoiseach asked how long this would take. The Prime Minister said that he did not want a delay but there could not be a fixed timetable. We had some momentum. It was important to meet on Friday and to continue working together. If there were solid opposition from the North he did not think he could carry Parliament.

The Taoiseach asked where the objections lay. The Prime Minister said that the language was a problem. It was seen as Hume/Adams' language, and therefore antipathetic to the Unionists. Hume/Adams had done enormous damage. The Taoiseach said it would not be credible not to proceed because of Hume/Adams. There had been no hue and cry against the Northern Ireland Secretary.

The Prime Minister said that Northern Irish politicians held a different position. The Taoiseach said that Northern Unionists had made an input to the Joint Declaration. Moreover, he had written to Mr Molyneaux, who had not replied.

The Prime Minister suggested that he should see Mr Molyneaux. He doubted if we would sign up by Friday, but the Prime Minister would be able to go to Dublin with a clear view of his position.

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The Taoiseach said that he didn't know what would then be presented as the result. The Prime Minister said that he could set out his side of the constitutional question. The Taoiseach replied that constitutional matters should be dealt with separately and not be allowed to complicate the document on peace.

The Prime Minister said that on Friday he would be able to clarify the time scale for entry into exploratory talks after a cessation of violence. This could be under three months. The Taoiseach said that this was fair enough.

The Prime Minister said that the meeting need not be a wash out. The Taoiseach said that there was no point in meeting if the result was a wash out. The Prime Minister said that he was not sure. If there was no meeting, people would say that the relationship had broken down. This would benefit the men of violence. It would do no good to London or Dublin. He and the Taoiseach knew each other well enough to keep the show on the road, even if it did not produce results.

The Taoiseach said that he wanted to let the dust settle. He did not want to meet on Friday and have nothing to say. He was worried that our people did not have a feel for what was needed. We needed more time.

The Prime Minister said this made it all the more important for him and the Taoiseach to have a long discussion. One possibility would be to run this as a working meeting with no communique. But this was not attractive as it would give rise to speculation. On the other hand, if there was no meeting it would not play well.

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The Taoiseach encouraged the Prime Minister to talk to Molyneaux. Few people on his side thought that the middle classes in Northern Ireland would not buy the Joint Declaration.

The Prime Minister wondered if the proposal for an Irish Convention could be dropped. The Taoiseach said that the proposal was only included to offer a bridge across the interval between a cessation of violence and the beginning of talks. If we were now to define the interval as three months, the Convention was perhaps less important. The Prime Minister suggested that it should therefore be dispensed with. The Taoiseach thought this might be possible.

The Prime Minister asked how the Taoiseach estimated the chances of a cessation of violence by the IRA. The Taoiseach said that until recently they had been very high but he did not know now. He had spoken on television of malign forces trying to undermine peace. The Prime Minister said that the leaks had done immense harm. People would therefore be relieved if they saw the Summit going ahead. The Taoiseach agreed that this would be a signal to keep hopes alive. Pressed by the Prime Minister, he said that he would put this to his Cabinet in the morning, talk to the Prime Minister later in the day and line up officials. The Prime Minister suggested that Irish officials might come to London on Wednesday or Thursday. He had allocated the whole of Friday to the Summit and would be ready to have a long meeting.

The Taoiseach repeated that the Irish Convention was dispensable on the basis of a short timetable leading to talks. The Prime Minister said that he would be prepared to put a position to the House of Commons for a three month interval until talks started on how Sinn Fein should come into the process - if the IRA

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said they would give up violence for good.

The Prime Minister said that he would try to see Molyneaux, and would be ready to show him the text. The Taoiseach agreed. The Prime Minister should show him the full document. This was just a proposal to freeze the present position, secure peace, and begin political talks. If agreement was not reached in those talks, the status quo would remain. The Prime Minister said that his conversation with Molyneaux must be kept entirely private. The Taoiseach said that he would tell no-one. He understood Molyneaux's importance.

The Prime Minister asked what would happen if the IRA did not respond. The Taoiseach said that we would stand together, and try to draw support away from them.

The Prime Minister said that it would not be easy to settle down the old suspicions and irrational fears which had re-awakened. The Taoiseach said we should rise above them. The Prime Minister agreed, but said it was not worth doing this if there was no hope of success.

**RODERIC LYNE**

29 November 1993

f/tao.mfj