



FROM: PUS
25 NOVEMBER 1993

- (ii) cc. PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (L,B&DENI)- B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Deverell - B
- Mr Wood (B) - B
- Mr Brooker - B
- Mr Cooke - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Marsh - B
- Mr Beeton - B
- Mr May - B

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

CONVERSATION WITH CARDINAL DALY

I saw Cardinal Daly yesterday afternoon (24 November) at his invitation - and quite a pressing one. I had called on him in Armagh some months ago to find a mistake in his office meant that he was not there. I thought no more about it, but he telephoned me at the end of last week personally to say that he was much embarrassed by that but would welcome a early meeting. I am not sure whether the mistake had just come to light or whether he thought this would be a timely moment to emphasise his assessment of the situation following his meeting with the Prime Minister the other day.

2. These were the main points to emerge from our conversation:

- (i) he was clear from all the information which came to him that the Provisional leadership were now ready to abandon the armed struggle if they could be helped to do it, and without the need for terms which would be unacceptable to either the British or Irish Governments. He said that Adams had sought to meet him (the Cardinal) over 10 or more years going back to the Cardinal's time as Bishop of Down and Connor. He had always refused this because of the effect of his associating in any way with Adams on good Catholics (for which read constitutal nationalists) but he

mentioned it simply as evidence that he believed that Adams had been looking for a path towards normal constitutional politics very persistently over a long period;

- (ii) he thought a formula ought to be capable of being found which would help the Provisionals; he did not think they would necessarily be able to move in one step from the armed struggle to its permanent abandonment and thought a peace process was inevitable (for interest, John Hume disagrees by reference to the essentially theological nature of the Provisionals' position, which once shifted would shift completely and finally);
- (iii) the Cardinal stressed the absolute importance of the British and Irish Governments holding together on this matter, as well as more generally regarding Northern Ireland. He said he had been worried by their apparent moving apart after the very good Joint Statement at the Brussels Summit at the end of October, but was reassured that they had come back together again;
- (iv) he said he hoped it was understood by the British Government that northern nationalism needed 'something constitutional' (by which I did not take him to mean joint authority or anything like that) for them to settle comfortably into a Northern Ireland still within the United Kingdom, but with stronger links with the South. I asked him whether he thought that strong North/South institutional links, a settlement of the Irish constitutional question, the continuation of the guarantee but with a full recognition of the position of the large nationalist minority within Northern Ireland in political, cultural and symbolic terms was what he had in mind: he did not demur but I think he was disappointed at that limited prospect;
- (v) he said he was not surprised but continually saddened by what he regarded as the totally unmoving stance of unionism. He added that no-one could describe Jim Molyneaux as in any sense a moderate. I said that I thought that just as there had been significant changes in the position of the Irish Government vis-à-vis its constitution and in its reaching out to unionism, so it was possible to see in the official Unionist position in last year's Talks and in things that had been said since both by their leader and by others, something that was by no means immobilist. I do not think I carried him with me though he listened as ever with great courtesy and attention;

(vi) finally, recalling a point from the note of his meeting with the Prime Minister I asked him whether he really thought that Sinn Fein as a political party could detach itself sufficiently far from the Provisional IRA so as to become acceptable even if peace had not been achieved. Rather against what he is recorded as saying at his meeting with the Prime Minister he said he thought that was quite impossible: unless and until the armed struggle was over any Sinn Fein leadership that tried to detach itself would be disowned or destroyed by the IRA and, because of their influence, by republicans at large.

3. He closed with some music reflections on Northern Ireland's recent history, and said that what seemed to him much more important now than it might have done 25 years ago was the difference east and west of the Bann. West of the Bann, nationalists were a majority in numbers mostly and also in influence and for the most part the Protestant union tradition west of the Bann found that perfectly acceptable under the umbrella of the present constitutional arrangements. East of the Bann and particularly Belfast were quite different and any political initiatives needed to have regard to those differences of outlook and attitude. I observed that I thought this reflected at one level what on the ground was an extremely complicated differentiated pattern, attitude and behaviour with for example nationalists in the Antrim Glens having a quite different outlook from those in South Armagh or Fermanagh or for that matter in Derry. Similarly unionism was made up of many strands some geographical but others differentiated in terms of religious affiliation with the Protestant community, education, class, history etc. Finding easy agreement on this obvious truth, our discussion concluded.

In summary, Mr Molyneux indicated that he would give silent acquiescence to a text along the lines he was shown, subject to a few, mainly cosmetic, changes. He suggested it might be shown to Mr Paisley also, shortly before any public announcement.

Detailed Comments

Mr Molyneux was shown a copy of the draft text and read it carefully. He then made the following comments:

Signed:
J A CHILCOT

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