

From: S L Rickard

Date: 15 November 1993

cc: PS/PUS (L&B)  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Deverell  
Mr Beeton  
Mr May  
SF27-26

Mr Cooke

Joint Declaration Initiative

Having now had a chance to take a proper look at JD13, I should record my own view that it is likely to cause more offence to Unionists than did earlier versions.

2. This is because paragraphs 6, 7 and 8, when added to the pre-existing 5, present the Taoiseach (alone) as tackling the key issues in the future of the people of Ireland. These passages read as if he is already Prime Minister of the whole island. The Taoiseach is presented as the bearer of the aspirations of both communities, North and South. This is of course very far from the truth, and I would expect these passages to magnify the offence which would anyway be caused by para 4.

3. One effect, for me, is to throw into much sharper relief the implications of the third sentence of paragraph 4, which now looks, as a result of the new language, more threatening than it did before.

4. On a subsidiary point, para 6 is pretty appalling on articles 2 and 3. It says, in terms, that if Unionists can substantiate articles 2 and 3 as a 'real and substantial' threat, or inconsistent with a 'democratic and pluralist' society, then 'the Taoiseach will think about it'; but with the references to 'inherited values' and 'roots' to warn us that he won't be helpful. The Unionists would no doubt find this much less friendly language than simple 'could/would'.

5. Finally, a 'retrospective' point which I should have made before on para 10 (previously 7). It is a possible reading of this paragraph that the Unionists have a choice. Either they

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can come along and participate in the Convention on the (to them) highly disadvantageous terms offered (eg the Conference's remit refers to the new Ireland forum, and to respect for the authority of 'institutions established by law in the state'); or they hang about outside it, in which case the Taoiseach takes the recommendations of the Convention and carries them straight into the relationship with the British, into which the British are bound by paras 2, 4 and (now) 9. Result either way: great disadvantage to Unionism.

6. In this line of argument, should we be more concerned about the Convention provision than we have been hitherto?

PS/PUS(L/RB)  
Mr Beverell  
Mr Cooke - Dastgair  
Mr Rickard  
Mr Boston  
Mr May

ff

S L Rickard

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15 November 1993

hour of 11 November.

I am of course very concerned at the suggestion that there is some kind of an emerging rift between our two Governments.

You and I have worked very closely together. I believe that our habit of plain speaking, and the trust we have developed, have been vital to cooperation between the British and Irish Governments on what is for both of us an increasingly delicate and important area of policy.

Only two weeks ago, in Brussels, we reached full agreement privately and in our Joint Statement on the way ahead. I said at the time that the two Governments had never been closer. I meant it. I have since done exactly what I said I would do. So I am particularly keen to clear up straight away any possible misunderstandings. For either of us to go back on our joint position subscribed to me by more than one leading Northern Irish politician as the way