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SUBJECT *RL6*
MASTER *ce RD*



Filed on:

10 DOWNING STREET
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From the Private Secretary

17 June 1993

Dear Jonathan,

**UK/IRISH SUMMIT, WEDNESDAY 16 JUNE 1993:
WORKING SUPPER**

Political development in Northern Ireland and the talks process was discussed between the two delegations at supper.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said that the objectives first set in March 1991 were still attainable, in his view. He referred to the judgment made by Sir Ninian Stephens at the end of the last round of talks. He was sure that we should stick to the three strands under the rubric that nothing would be agreed until everything was agreed. However, he accepted that the situation had changed. In the local elections, Paisley had not suffered for his negative approach. The Ulster Unionists had received a jolt. Molyneaux had since told him that he was no longer on the same rock as HMG, and had set out his opposition to the "high wire act". Molyneaux wanted a two strand process, with bilateral talks between the parties. Hume was prepared to talk to anyone and to discuss internal matters bilaterally. Sir Patrick Mayhew thought that Hume would be prepared to give up his proposal for three Commissioners. Hume's prime concern was with strand two, whereas the Unionists were mainly interested in strand one. John Alderdyce of the Alliance Party had flipped at the end of the talks, through irritation at the refusal of the SDLP to move.

The Northern Ireland Secretary thought we would have to wait until the autumn before there would be a real prospect of resuming the talks. However, there was much to be done bilaterally in the meantime. This included further work on a British Government paper. We should also try to build up the confidence of the Unionists, and counteract their sense of alienation. The extradition legislation to be adopted by the Irish Government would help, as did the good co-operation between the police forces.

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The Taoiseach said that he had just repeated to the press the Irish Government's commitment to support the talks process. However, he was not sure that it would be possible to hold to this position for long. There was a rising credibility problem. Although the local elections were now over, it would not be long before next year's European elections came into view. We could not hold the position much beyond the autumn. Molyneaux was old and tired, although he had some good people behind him. The two Governments should work together behind the scenes to consider what to do if the talks did not resume.

The Tanaiste commented that the Unionists were not prepared to look at the options. They would not talk. The British Government should tell them that we had to find some way of resolving the nightmare. There was a short interval now before the European elections. In those elections, Paisley could be expected again to campaign against the talks, in order to attract support.

The Prime Minister said that Mr Spring's speech on 5 March had been immensely helpful. It had undercut the Unionists. However, it had now lost its resonance, and we needed to induce the Unionists to come back to the negotiating table. Perhaps the Taoiseach could help by reiterating Mr Spring's points. The Northern Ireland Secretary agreed. Articles 2 and 3 were a real impediment. It would be helpful if the Taoiseach could repeat the Tanaiste's remarks.

The Taoiseach expressed reservations. He had to take account of what was feasible, given the views of the Irish people. Articles 2 and 3 had not always been seen as an impediment - for example at the time of the Sunningdale agreement. Other signals were important - such as the solution to the Adelaide Hospital problem and the development of closer trade and economic links. We should not take a simplistic view of Articles 2 and 3.

The Tanaiste recalled that the special position granted in the Irish Constitution to the Catholic Church had posed a similar problem in the past, but had been removed in the time of Jack Lynch. If Articles 2 and 3 were amended, certain people would find other grounds for complaint.

Sir Patrick Mayhew said that we needed to mobilise public opinion in order to exercise more pressure on politicians in Northern Ireland and to avoid a vacuum. He knew that the Irish had been working on proposals of their own. However, we should not put forward a joint scheme: new proposals should come from the British side alone.

The Prime Minister said it would not be easy to make progress. There was a gut feeling among the Unionists that this was a one way street rather than a two way street. They could apply the brakes, but were not being offered the chance of putting the car into reverse. We had not offered the option of a referendum on closer integration into the UK.

Security

The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the good co-operation on cross border security. The Northern Ireland Secretary underlined the importance of intelligence work. Co-operation between the Chief Constable and the Garda Commander was excellent. But the border was an important asset to the terrorists. A disproportionately large number of incidents occurred in border areas. He hoped it would be possible for the Irish to deploy more resources. John Chilcot and Timothy Dalton described the work of the official group which they co-chaired. The Prime Minister suggested that Messrs Chilcot and Dalton should be invited to prepare a short joint paper for the next bilateral summit in Dublin describing the achievements of security co-operation, the subjects under discussion and the way ahead. The Taoiseach said that he had no objection to this. In conclusion, he made a passing reference to the possibility of holding the next meeting in the early autumn rather than towards the end of the year.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

R. Lyne.

RODERIC LYNE

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Northern Ireland Office