



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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7 June 1995

Dear Secretary

COPY TO:

PST  
PSS

MR. F. MURRAY  
MR. P. TEAHON  
MR. S. DONLON  
MR. T. DALTON



*Mr. Hillin*  
*S.H. 14.6.95*  
*to see please*  
*12/6/95*

EMBASSY OF IRELAND



COPY TO:

PST  
PSS

MR. F. MURRAY  
MR. P. TEAHON  
MR. S. DONLON  
MR. T. DALTON

1. I thought I should convey some of the more interesting points that arose in various bilateral conversations over the period of the Washington Investment Conference.
2. As you know, the Unionist delegation - Ross, Beggs, Empey, Donaldson, Allen, Rogan and Wilson - came to the Residence for lunch on the Tuesday before the Conference and stayed for three hours. (Jim Nicholson, who did not arrive in Washington until later in the week, was the only missing member of the group). Their decision to come to the Residence and - with the exception of Willie Ross - their quite relaxed mood, was in itself an encouraging step forward. However, apart from some positive signals in private from Jeffrey Donaldson and Denis Rogan, the political discussion did not show any desire or willingness to seize the potential of the peace process and move matters forward. It was as if some of the delegation - Ross and Beggs in particular - were caught in a timewarp and unable to see the hugely positive developments which have taken place around them in recent years, including the critical elements in the Framework Document which should be attractive to them, and the greatly changed and matured attitude of public opinion in the South to Unionism.
3. Above all perhaps, what kept surfacing in our discussion was a deep suspicion and resentment of the attitude of the British. This focussed largely, though by no means exclusively, on the failure of either the Prime Minister or the Secretary of

State to inform the SDLP and the Unionists, at their recent joint meeting at Downing Street, of the decision of the Secretary of State to seek a meeting with Gerry Adams during the Washington Conference. This was compounded by the inexplicable move to make public this decision while Hume, Molyneaux and their colleagues were in Downing Street. As a result, and inevitably, Molyneaux and Hume - who were handed the press release as they emerged from the meeting - were "bounced" by the press, who focussed exclusively on the Mayhew announcement and not on "the historic meeting" which had just taken place.

4. Despite our counter arguments, the visitors saw this not as an inadvertent muddle but as part of a continuing British conspiracy to alienate and undermine moderate Unionism. They made the point strongly that the Secretary of State would have had to receive Cabinet sanction for the decision (probably earlier that day), and it was inconceivable, therefore, that either he or the Prime Minister could have overlooked mentioning it to Molyneaux or Hume. They also cited a number of other examples of British bad faith in the recent past, including the unwillingness of Michael Ancram to convey any real information about the Framework Document in their many meetings with him - he simply "soaked information" from them - and the failure of the British to include even one sentence in the Framework texts from the many Unionist submissions to them.
5. One result of all this was that, while Molyneaux and the OUP had skilfully succeeded in diminishing the influence of Paisley and his party in recent years, the British were progressively restoring their credibility. The depth of the delegation's feelings and paranoia in relation to the British is perhaps best summed up in the view expressed by Reg Empey that, while it pained him greatly to say it, Unionists

now placed far more trust in what was said to them by Dublin than by London officials.

Jim Nicholson

6. In a discussion later in the week with Jim Nicholson, who is an old friend, the following points of interest arose:

- Nicholson sees no prospect of round table talks until the Autumn given (a) the curse of anniversaries (12th, IRA ceasefire, etc), which should all be ignored, and (b) the reality that the Official Unionist party probably had to resolve its leadership issue before going into talks. In this regard, he thought that John Taylor was the front runner (though there is no love lost between the two);
- Jim Molyneaux may well have made a mistake in not going to Washington, given the sensitive speech of the President and also the likelihood that the White House would have done something special for him (I had briefed Nicholson on this latter aspect). That said, the British had made things next to impossible for Molyneaux through the Downing Street press release debacle (see paras 3 and 4 above);
- Robert McCartney, despite the optimistic noises from Ken Maginnis, looked likely to win easily in the North Down by-election.

Other points

- Jeffrey Donaldson, who is extremely open-minded and committed to moving Unionism away from its instinctive tendency to focus on the

negative, was very saddened and embarrassed by the abysmal performance of Willie Ross at the meeting with the Tánaiste. He, and also Denis Rogan and Jack Allen, were equally embarrassed by Ross' tendency to turn the conversation to old and anachronistic issues at the lunch in the Residence;

- Donaldson has no doubt that Unionists will in time come to the table but he would ask us not to push them too quickly. They need time to adjust to the new and developing situation but recent meetings, including with the Tánaiste in Washington and over lunch at the Residence, were significant moves in the right direction.
- Denis Rogan, who has business interests in the South and struck me as possibly a useful (and certainly a very pleasant) contact, made very much the same points to me as Donaldson. (He is, I believe, party Vice-Chairman);
- Both Donaldson and Rogan took on board a point we made at the lunch that, unlike the Unionists, the SDLP and Sinn Féin tended to pick out the positive aspects - from their points of view - in texts and argue that they represent a significant step forward, which they would actively seek to build on. The Unionists, on the other hand, too often tended to see conspiracy under every stone!

#### Mo Mowlam

7. Mo Mowlam, the Shadow Spokesperson on Northern Ireland, came to the Residence for a private lunch on the Monday before the Conference, and also attended the party there later in the week. She questioned me at some length on

decommissioning, and we also discussed other issues, including prisoners, in detail.

8. At the end of the Conference, Ms Mowlam mentioned in private an idea (which I suspect was not her own) about a possible (and progressive) link between decommissioning and the return of British troops to their home bases on the "mainland". I pass it on for what its worth; however, my own view remains that, if we are to defuse and make progress on this issue (and thereby facilitate the convening of talks), we need to move it "outside the box" and onto a separate track, probably with some external assistance and involvement.
9. I have probably already covered most of the above in our discussions since the Conference, but I thought you might find it helpful if I sent this note for the record.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Dermot Gallagher  
Ambassador

Seán Ó hUiginn Uas  
Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs