



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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AMBASAÍD NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



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30 March 1995

Mr Sean O hUiginn  
Second Secretary  
Anglo-Irish Division  
HQ

Dear Secretary

**Latest thinking of David Trimble MP**

I gathered the other day from Mo Mowlam's office that Mowlam has received a copy of a book or extensive pamphlet on the Framework Document by David Trimble.

We subsequently made an approach to Trimble's office and got through to Trimble himself, who told Ms Behan that his draft needs to be approved in Glengall Street and is therefore not yet available.

From this we can infer that Trimble is consulting Mowlam on work in progress.

Yesterday one of my friends in the Unionist Graduates Association called on me at home to let me have a copy of a record that has been made of a recent meeting between Trimble and that Association. Martin Smyth was at the meeting as were a number of friendly outsiders. (Apparently a suggestion that the Embassy could be invited was rejected by Trimble!)

The record of Trimble's comments speaks for itself.

I note that

- \* there is a developing UUP-Labour relationship, although Trimble feels that the British Government may "tack back" towards the Unionists
- \* Trimble favours a policy of political involvement by the UUP, rather than one of "waiting for the present arrangements to collapse"; in this he seems to agree with the analysis put to us for example by Sinn Fein the other day that a continuing political process is a safeguard against a relapse into violence
- \* Trimble favours a review of the policy of not appearing on platforms with Sinn Fein

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\* as to strategy, Trimble favours linking devolution in Northern Ireland to devolution to Scotland and Wales; this final point ties in of course with the developing relationship with the Labour Party.

My informant put a positive construction on Trimble's interest in devolution - along the lines that it should facilitate the search for a settlement. He pointed out that Trimble's criticisms of the Framework Document are now focused on the panel and on "intervention and override powers", rather than on the North\South body. My informant was also aware of the study which has been passed to Mo Mowlam. He commented that Ken Maginnis was the main author of earlier studies.

My feeling is that we should be slow to take comfort from Trimble's new-found interest in Scottish and Welsh devolution. It implies a slow pace to any negotiations under the Conservative Government and it may also ultimately be a means of blurring the special character of Northern Ireland on which the argument for a North\South body relies.

This less sanguine view is encouraged in my mind by what my informant told me about a disagreement between Trimble and Smyth at the meeting with the Unionist Graduates Association.

It seems that Smyth argued that in a long-term perspective Scottish and Welsh devolution, against a European background, could be a means of drawing the Republic into a closer relationship not only with Northern Ireland but with the island of Britain. This point is covered in the last section of the attached minute.

Trimble "gently disagreed" with Smyth, arguing that the Republic is "proud of its independence". While this was put to me as evidence of Trimble's awareness of Irish concerns, it may also be evidence of a stand-offish position towards ourselves which Smyth does not fully share.

What I find encouraging in Trimble's reported comments is his description of Adams as a "respectable grandfather" who will "not initiate a return to violence". This presumably lies behind Trimble's readiness to inject at least a minimum of Unionist thinking into the continuing political process.

You will recall that the Unionist Graduates Association has had a number of contacts with the Embassy subsequent to the relatively formal meeting of last October. Most recently three of their members were at the Embassy for St Patrick's Day. I understand that they intend to seek a further round-table discussion with us, on the October model, at the end of April or in early May.

Yours sincerely



Philip McDonagh  
Counsellor

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## UNIONIST GRADUATES ASSOCIATION

Great Britain Branch

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### MEETING WITH DAVID TRIMBLE, M.P., 21-III-95

#### Mr Trimble - Outline of Developments to Date

With the situation as it stands, it remains to be seen if the rupture between the UUP and the Conservatives is permanent or merely a "hiccup". There is a "burgeoning relationship" between the UUP and Labour, but similarly, we must wait to see if this is a real development or merely "one side using the other".

The Ceasefires are obviously a good thing, in and of themselves, but we must decide what we feel the reasons behind them actually were in order to move forward intelligently.

One possibility is that the IRA simply recognised that they had failed to break the will of the people, and were in addition under pressure from their own constituency to end a campaign which appeared to invite the retaliatory offensives of the "loyalist" paramilitaries.

The other, more likely scenario is that it represents a new tactic, and is the realisation of the PSF leadership that more political "chips" are available through respectability and working in concert with John Hume. Whatever is achieved through the lengthy talks process can be portrayed as an "interim solution" or "transitional phase" ultimately resulting in a United Ireland, and pressure could thus be placed on HMG and the UUP to grant further concessions in this direction.

The Loyalist Ceasefire was built on the assumption that "the Union is Safe" (Martin Smyth M.P., who was also present, suggested that they did not necessarily believe this) and this does mean that there are two mutually contradictory reasons for peace. At some point, one may be proved wrong, at which point we can reasonably expect violence to re-commence from the disappointed side.

There is of course no reason to suppose that HMG would make direct concessions in its one-on-one talks with PSF. What had to happen was the outlining in the Framework Document created by both governments of points which would satisfy the minimum demands of the Republicans as laid down in Hume-Adams. The HMG-UUP relationship could be said to have come off the rails in the autumn, but even then there was reason to suppose that whilst the Stormont Castle element was unsympathetic to our position, we could still recover ground at Westminster. This was proved wrong with the leaks and the Document itself.

#### Mr Trimble - some points about the Document

The internal arrangements for Northern Ireland bear a strong resemblance to our own suggestions in the Blueprint for Stability, but the key problem area is the nature of the 3-man Panel, which, being directly and separately elected, we can assume would consist of Paisley, Hume and Molyneux. Among its duties would be the appointment of Chairmen of the Committees, which would be rubber stamped by the Assembly, intervening in disputes over expenditure, appointments etc, advising the Secretary of State and handling those matters which are passed to

it when a "blocking minority" comes into operation in Assembly voting. This Panel is, therefore, the real government of Northern Ireland.

Whose idea was this? Broadly speaking, John Hume's. In the 1993 Inter-Party Talks, he held out for such a Panel, with London, Dublin and Brussels being represented, plus an "advisory Assembly". Agreement had almost been reached in 1993 - with something like a highly-compromised version of our "Blueprint for Stability" as its basis - between HMG, APNI, DUP, UUP and many SDLP representatives, but Hume held out for his frankly undemocratic idea and torpedoed the talks.

Other interesting aspects of the Document include the "Intervention and Override Powers" (described by Jim Molyneux as "Joint Authority in a particularly hideous form"). Part II of the Document, in Para 46, talks about "Either Government" being able to intervene, with the Inter-Governmental Conference to "Agree a Procedure". This is not consultation - it is not up for negotiation. The form of words was obviously very carefully worked out by both sides, and it is precisely this that Jim Molyneux managed to have removed from the Downing St. Declaration. John Major told Ian Paisley that he would object to such a clause ("kick it over the rooftops"). At some point, therefore, the Irish managed to have it re-inserted; we suspect Sir Patrick Mayhew put it in after the Ceasefire.

**Mr Trimble - What is going to happen?**

Mr Molyneux believes that HMG brought our relationship with them to an end; we will gradually, therefore, gradually increase our Parliamentary leverage against them over the coming months. We may, however, assume that HMG is "tacking" between ourselves and SF/IRA, and, having got them on board, may tack back towards us. That said, Major is manifestly not in control of the agenda - witness the debacle of Gerry Adams' visit to President Clinton.

**Mr Trimble - What will we do?**

We do not intend to hold detailed discussions on the basis of the present document. It claims, however, to be merely consultative - taking this at face value, therefore, we are entitled to say that we have read it, do not like it, and introduce our own agenda.

Alternatively, we could sit back and wait for the present arrangements to collapse, when the separate assumptions of the paramilitaries collide and violence re-emerges. We do not intend to pursue this option with its obvious dangers, and are thus focusing at present on the demilitarisation issue, as whatever happens it is vital that we concentrate on creating a situation where the gun cannot be reintroduced into politics.

**Mr Trimble & Mr Smyth - Possible Solutions & other responses to questions**

Ideally we should be governed just like Scotland and Wales, without the special status Devolution would involve. Failing that, devolution in the form of glorified local government, with no fiscal powers, would be a starting point. However, given that there is a strong likelihood of Devolution for those Nations, we might reasonably expect to work on a basis of Devolution to us being analogous to or in parallel with the Scots and Welsh.

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The public, incidentally, will stand firm. HMG will not appeal to them over our heads - Major has said as much from the Despatch Box. Unlike the situation in 1973, there are no elements in the UUP who have been tricked or bribed into supporting HMG's agenda. Local support is holding up. We expect to win the vacant Bangor West Council Seat; even though the Conservatives have a power base there and their candidate is a highly regarded figure. This obviously bodes well for the impending by-election following the tragic death of Sir James Kilfedder.

Gary McMichael's foray to the White House should be viewed as a damp squib, and is essentially on the same respectability hunting lines as Gerry Adams' trip. McMichael got no platform and did few interviews - we got much more attention from the Maginness/Adams debate on Larry King. We are currently reviewing our position regarding being seen in public or on television taking part in programmes with Sinn Fein representatives. As things stand they can drive us off any platform and our message doesn't get across. That said, there is an element of bias in the media which is being displayed towards us - the C4 opinion poll which appeared to endorse the talks also mentioned - though this was passed over - that some quarter of Roman Catholics - and a quarter of SDLP members/supporters - favoured UK membership. We have attempted to gradually broaden our appeal by referring to the "greater number" rather than the "majority community" in Northern Ireland, and there is evidence that this is working, though there is a long way to go.

There is a reasonably optimistic prognosis for the future. The possibility of elements in the IRA regarding the ceasefire as a failed tactic, or the collision of the paramilitaries' respective theses, may result in turbulence in, say, the summer, but there will be no return to serious inter-communal violence.

#### **Martin Smyth on the Federal Option**

This is appearing more likely than ever it was when he first proposed it in 1972, when it was derided by all save some *Guardian* journalists who talked about the creation of "TONA" - the Isles of the North Atlantic. With the developments of regionalism in Europe plus the devolutionary policies of both Labour and the Lib Dems, it represents a very real chance for peace. DT - Hume persistently talks in this context of a "post Nationalist World", which makes it all the more sad that he persists, unlike many others in Ireland, with a nationalist irredeemist agenda. With the Council for Security & Co-operation in Europe and its Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, designed to sort out problems similar to ours, we can see real hope.

There is hope also in the positions of the Paramilitaries. Adams is a grandfather now, and a respectable one. He will not initiate a return to violence. The Loyalists, too, have been playing an astute political game. The position of Bill Clinton in all this has been useful. He has invested too much credibility to be made a fool of by the Paramilitary elements. Hillary has referred to him as "my husband the peacemaker". Major's "peace to NI" card is also a key trump for him; the Euro-sceptics are gradually being brought back into the fold (Cash has been nicknamed "devalued" by Martin Smyth as he keeps quiet, hoping to get a seat after the boundary changes.) It is possible that once they are back in line, Major will transfer his attention to us.