



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

**Reference Code:** 2021/100/9

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Accession Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

5

*Patton, Borough  
Councillor A.I.*

*Mr. Cooney  
The should be in the  
at an agenda file. 2 3:45  
detailed with  
a facility. 3/10*

**Meeting with Sinn Féin  
Belfast, 30 April 1998**

**Confidential**

Further to Mr. Bassett's note regarding our meeting with Sinn Féin (de Brúin, McAteer and Maskey), the following points on security related matters were by them.

**Policing**

They signalled deep discomfort with the announcement of Chris Patton as the designated chair of the Policing Commission. It had caused them serious internal difficulties at a critical time (Maskey was inarticulate with suppressed rage - "we were laughed at", he muttered). They did not reject the point that Patton was a potentially good appointment but the real issue was presentational and timing. (It would not be wild speculation to connect the IRA statement with the Patton announcement). McAteer underlined the greater significance of getting the other appointees right. They felt that it was critical that one appointee be familiar with human rights in Northern Ireland and that the international figure have expertise in restructuring policing - i.e. they were against the international figure being synonymous with human rights and not policing changes (e.g. El Salvador, Catalonia etc.). They were also keen on having someone from the South on the Commission.

More broadly, they admitted that as a party they had been naturally pre-occupied with internal matters and were now very concerned that the NIO had stolen a march on them. They emphasised that policing and related changes in security were critical for the success of their immediate campaign to win support for the Agreement.

On more than one occasion they admitted that their resources were limited in terms of formulating credible proposals on alternative policing and asked for any assistance we might be able to offer.

They also registered concern at the inherent dangers in the intervening period before new policing arrangements are in place, particularly places like West Belfast and Ardoyne (especially in light of the bi-annual loyalist parade along Cliftonville Road due this year). Some rapid response mechanism at political level may be required to defuse potential flair-ups with the RUC.

**Security Programme**

They were very keen to see movement on normalisation. If anything, matters were deteriorating

with an increase in the Army's profile. (I had been surprised to see a joint Army/RUC patrol on the Falls Road on the previous day. Claims have also been made about a resumption of "sighting" of civilians with weapons by Army personnel. Alex Attwood reported that the RUC were seen in West Belfast walking down the middle of the road stopping cars which is viewed by locals as an insulting act of bravado). Rather than seeing security installations being dismantled, McAteer and de Brúin said that new 'mobile phone' masts were being erected without local consultation. Locals believed that these masts were also carry other surveillance equipment). McAteer said that the RIR seemed to be particularly active in a hostile way. An announcement that the RIR were being withdrawn to barracks would be enormously helpful to Sinn Féin. Overall, they wanted to see rapid action on the Agreement's proposed overall normalisation strategy.

### **Prisoners**

They were obviously interested in detailed briefing on how prison releases would work in practice and they made two key points. Firstly, an authoritative figure on the number of republicans released in the first tranche would give them considerable comfort for up-coming internal meetings. We said we would explore this and revert. Secondly, they said that any attempt to impose internal hoops for prisoners to jump through prior to release could damage the positive elements of the package for them and threaten confrontation. Republican prisoners were very sensitive about any semblance of having to pass under the yoke prior to release.

### **Criminal Justice**

I said that I could offer very little in terms of the NIO's current ideas on how to take this forward. We would be discussing this at official level in the near future. Sinn Féin did not reject the point that a government led review need not be less imaginative and reforming as a Commission, a reaction which said less about the merit of the point (doubtful in the case of the NIO) and more about Sinn Féin's willingness to approach the mechanisms for review in as positive a light as possible. But as Maskey pointed out, the credibility of these mechanisms was pretty thin in republican communities and easily damaged.



Eamonn McKee

Anglo-Irish Division

1 May 1998

8

Commission on Policing 2/4 P48

AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH  
BÉAL FEIRSTE

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT  
BELFAST

**Confidential**

4 May 1998

Mr Colm Ó Floinn  
Counsellor  
Anglo-Irish Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs

~~Dear Colm~~ S.S

**Re: Nominations for Commission on Policing**

On receipt of Secretary Gallagher's fax on Friday night (1 May) regarding the above, the nominations were conveyed to the British side per the attached note. In the absence of senior British Secretariat personnel, due to the holiday weekend, I conveyed the note direct to Christine Collins of the NIO on Friday night who was waiting to brief John Steele who was meeting with Chris Patten on Saturday morning to discuss the composition of the Commission. I emphasised to her the importance we attached to the composition of the Commission in terms of the quality and independence of members appointed to it. I will also make our position clear to Peter Bell on his return on Tuesday morning.

Today (Monday) I received a **confidential** read-out on Saturday's discussion with Patten. It appears that a list of names, including those nominated by us, was gone through. While there was a consensus that some were still unknown quantities and arrangements were being made to find out more about them, in terms of background etc., there was a firming-up, in principle on some elements of the Commission. It appears that Patten is very keen to have [REDACTED] as part of the team, while [REDACTED] and also former Chief Inspector of Constabulary, is emerging as the external policing expert. I understand that when Paul Condon was appointed head of the London Metropolitan that Smith gave him a close run for the job.

[REDACTED] is also very strongly "in the ring". It is understood that she originally has a police background and served at a senior level in the New York police with William Bratton (I am not sure whether this is the same individual referred to by Maurice Hayes in a recent conversation with the Joint Secretary, when he mentioned a senior advisor to the Governor of Massachusetts on policing matters, named Cathy O'Rourke).

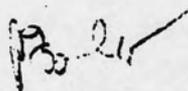
In looking at the broader international dimension, it appears that [REDACTED] New York is being seriously considered as is a Canadian, [REDACTED]. I understand from Collins that Searing has a human rights background, was involved with the South African Police Commission in the early 1990s and had an advisory function with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

In the event that Maurice Hayes becomes a member of the Commission, they will be looking at a balance from the Unionists community and I understand that one of the names being considered is [REDACTED]. They are also still looking at finding a suitable person with a changed management background and she confirmed that a Commission of seven, including the Chairman was envisaged.

Collins indicated that they expected to discuss the outcome of Saturday's discussion with Patten with the Secretary of State on Tuesday and the hope was to firm-up the composition by the end of the week. She emphasised that their objective was to keep it under wraps until after the referendum but again stressed that the Secretary of State could be anxious to move very quickly after the referendum and consequently they were anxious to have things packaged and ready to go at an early stage.

She mentioned that John Steele would be likely to touch on this area at the forthcoming lunch in the Secretariat on Wednesday. She felt that he was unlikely to formally go into the detail outlined above. She again emphasised the confidentiality they were attaching to this and said that they were trying to keep it within a very tight loop within the NIO.

Yours sincerely



Pat Folan

04/05 93 MON 17:00 FAX 44 COLLECT 17281 2004  
4/250

**NOTE TO THE BRITISH SIDE**

**Re Nominations for the Independent Commission on Policing**

Further to discussions today, the following nominations are put forward for the Independent Commission on Policing:-

Michael Lavery QC  
Charlie Hill QC  
Angela Hegarty  
Eugene Grant QC

Zelda Hoffman (South Africa)  
Professor Gerry Lynch (US)  
Paul Evans (US)  
K.J. Long (Finland)  
Robert Wasserman (US)  
Francis Guillen (Spain)

Brief CVs in relation to the nominees from outside Northern Ireland are attached. You will appreciate the very tight deadline afforded to us to offer nominations for the international nominees and further details could be provided later if requested.

You will, of course, appreciate that the independent and international dimensions of the Commission as provided for in the Belfast Agreement are critical to the achievement of our shared objectives. It is essential in this regard that the membership of the Commission be clearly independent and that its membership includes those with extensive experience of the human rights dimension in Northern Ireland.

*Pat Folan*  
Pat Folan

1 May 1998