

Dermot Nally Papers

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SECRET

Meeting with Rod Lyne, Private Secretary
to the British Prime Minister, Friday, 12 November, 1993

Mr. Roderick Lyne, Private Secretary (Diplomatic) to the Prime Minister, accompanied by the British Ambassador, Mr. Blatherwick called to deliver a letter to the Taoiseach from the British Prime Minister, Mr. Major. The Taoiseach was accompanied by Mr. Seán Ó hUigín of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the undersigned.

Mr. Lyne spoke of a misunderstanding. The Prime Minister was not rejecting the Taoiseach's proposed initiative or shutting the door. But he had great difficulties with it. He would see Archbishop Eames shortly, and after that reply to the Taoiseach. It was a complete misapprehension that the Prime Minister was not interested in the opportunity. In his Mansion House speech he would clearly be going down both tracks. But the Hume/Adams publicity had queered the pitch. *mm* The Prime Minister had tried very hard to explain the situation to John Hume, and why they could not use his proposal. But equally, he had told Paisley he was not prepared to sit around. There was no going back from anything in the Joint Brussels statement or anything agreed.

The Taoiseach reminded Mr. Lyne that the P.M. and he had been talking about this together long before any publicity about Hume/Adams. He had the documentation three months before the joint statement. There were not 100 different solutions. They were going to end up with common strands. But it appeared to him that not even the principle was being considered, and John Hume was being blamed. Nothing had apparently changed since Robin Butler's visit before Brussels. The position was untenable for the Irish Government and from the point of view of the democratic process and political stability. A large number of people in Northern Ireland feel that there is a solution. He was convinced of the opportunity of peace. If it was rejected, and it appeared no-one was interested, the SDLP could be decimated, and SF/IRA would be back in business.

Mr. Lyne said the Prime Minister had virtually the same message from every caller, including the less fanatical part of the Protestant community. Even Molyneux was not inflexible. The Prime Minister recently had spent three times as much time on Northern Ireland than any other question. He shared the perception of change. *W* There was a chance to challenge the men of violence on both sides and put in front

of them whatever incentive there was to enter the political process. There was pressure on them from below, from the sides and from above. The Prime Minister would make an important statement at the Mansion House.

The Taoiseach referred to a message from Molyneaux, that he would neither support nor oppose, and to conversations with Archbishop Eames, and indirectly with Reverend Magee. He had been assured that 90-95% of loyalist violence would cease within 7 days of other violence. There had been an important input from Eames into making it a more balanced document. But nothing was going forward.

Lyne insisted the Taoiseach had the wrong message. The one bright element had been that the the Prime Ministers were standing together. The Taoiseach emphasised that time was not on our side. Ireland could not afford not to confront the situation. Lyne said the UK could not afford not to confront it. The situation cost £3-5 billion a year. No-one stood to gain more from the cessation of violence. He emphasised Molyneaux needed Major, as much as the other way round. The constraint was what was viable. It was difficult to see either Prime Minister getting anywhere on their own.

The Taoiseach said the British appeared to be looking for unconditional surrender. There must be some understand of their psychology. SF/IRA follow a political philosophy. Were we to ignore a total, absolute change of direction for the sake of words? Consent was built in, self-determination was being accepted only on a concurrent basis. The basic issue is, is the will around to see the end of violence for the sake of words? No-one's future was going to be compromised.

Lyne expressed worries about apparent concessions to 25 years of violence. He accepted the price was not as high as it was in 1988. Would Hume's negotiations raise expectations that they could get more? He accepted the price was not as high as it was in 1988.

The Taoiseach emphasised a political solution could be far away. It was a question of allowing both communities to live in peace and lead a normal life. What we were looking for was a pale shadow of the 1921 Treaty, the theoretical basis of which was the whole of Ireland. He estimated the chances of a cessation at about 50-50. He rejected a suggestion by the Ambassador that they should go with the declaration so as to wrongfoot the Provisional IRA. What they were looking at was a very delicate balance of words that did not prejudice the future, had no hidden

agendas. He had sought to pass on a message of the need for deescalation of violence. In the last two weeks, there has been a reasonable response.

Lyne said there were difficulties with a deadline, and also the repeated talk of Hume/Adams.

The Taoiseach said one could not get peace totally for free. All political cover had been supplied. The question was did we want a deal or not. The Prime Minister should be given a bit of space by those around him.

Lyne said Major was not going to commit political suicide, and he referred to the difficulty of defending what could be interpreted as a bargain with terrorism. The point was made forcefully and repeatedly to him in reply that the only people they were dealing with on this was the Irish Government.

Lyne finished by emphasising that no decision had been taken, now doors slammed.

The Taoiseach referred to the fact the necessary support and psychological momentum could probably only be held for a certain time.

After the meeting I was informed that Ministers would meet again on Wednesday or Thursday, and we should get a response (not necessarily a final yes or no, however) by the end of this week.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be a stylized 'T' or 'L' followed by a flourish.

15 November, 1993.