

Dermot Nally Papers

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Conversation with Archbishop Eames

Archbishop Eames said that at his meeting in Downing Street he had fully backed the Taoiseach's initiative, on the basis that it recognized the two traditions.

He was however concerned about the hyping of the date of 3 December.

He said he had very frank discussions with the PM, which went beyond the document. The PM was very concerned about in-fighting in his own party, though he genuinely wanted the peace initiative to go forward.

Some concern was expressed about the last few sections on the Convention, though I pointed out that this did not directly involve either the British Government or the Unionists.

He was asked about the prospects of the Provisional IRA giving up violence, and expressed reasonable confidence about this, and also importantly that he still believed it would be reciprocated on the loyalist side.

Jim Molyneaux had been severely knocked off balance by the leaked document, the effect of which Eames described as 'devastating'. He met Eames for 2 hours at the weekend. After the meeting with the Unionist councillors, he was 'a frightened man'.

Eames had persuaded both the PM and Mayhew to talk to Molyneaux on the telephone, and after this Molyneaux had been a little happier. What was vitally important was that there was no give or change on the requirement of the need for the consent of 'a majority'. I gave him an absolute reassurance on this. He felt Molyneaux might have been prepared to agree to a direct meeting but for the leak.

He had afterwards received a note from Downing Street expressing full appreciation of the conversation, and suggesting that there would need to be another one, when things had progressed further.

23 November 1993