

Dermot Nally Papers

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CONFIDENTIAL

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Mr Seán Ó hUiginn
Assistant Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2

Dear Assistant Secretary

DISCUSSION WITH CARDINAL CATHAL DALY

Cardinal Daly joined me for lunch at the Embassy yesterday. Arrangements had originally been made for this lunch to take place on 1 December, on the occasion of his visit to London to give a major address to the Parliamentary Catholic Community in the House of Commons as a contribution to the peace initiative but had to be postponed because of a change in the Cardinal's travel plans. The Cardinal's views on recent developments are summarised in the following report.

The Joint Declaration

Cardinal Daly was full of admiration for the achievement of the Irish Government in negotiating such an historic declaration and for extracting so many substantive concessions from the British. He was particularly impressed by the passion and sincerity which the Taoiseach exhibited in presenting his case to the media. It was quite clear from Dr Daly's comments that he has not much regard for Mayhew. He regards him as being pro-Unionist, a negative influence on John Major, and compared him unfavourably to Peter Brooke who, he felt, had a much more sympathetic understanding of the Nationalists' aspirations. The Cardinal was also dismissive of Michael Ancram whom he described as a "Castle Catholic". He saw no real value in the talks Ancram has been having with

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the political parties. However, he had respect for John Chilcot and formed the impression that he was open-minded in his attitude. He felt that the real problem with the Northern Ireland Office was its one-sided, pro-Unionist stance. There was nobody of any standing in that Office to argue and promote the Nationalist position. Care had always been taken to ensure that any official from the Nationalist community serving in the NIO was tame and safe. The achievement of the Irish side in getting agreement for such a substantive declaration was, he said, all the more meritorious, given the negative advice that John Major was getting from Mayhew and the NIO. I explained to the Cardinal that the Taoiseach kept reminding Major of that serious deficiency and had advised the Prime Minister to discount the advice he was getting from that source. The Cardinal said he was aware that Dr Eames played a certain role behind the scenes. Eames was, he said, very close to Molyneaux and whereas the Cardinal himself had learned from experience that Eames was not always trustworthy, he understood that on this occasion his contribution was quite positive and helpful.

Peace Prospects

The Cardinal referred to the great yearning for peace that existed in Northern Ireland. He disagreed with the remarks of Molyneaux before the joint declaration issued about the attitude of the Protestant middle class and professional people. The Sinn Fein and IRA leadership were obviously engaged in a soul-searching exercise. There must be patience on the part of all concerned and they must be given enough time to come to a decision. Personally the Cardinal said he remained hopeful. The remarks of Gerry Adams on 3 January held out some hope of a favourable decision. He was, however, puzzled by the position attributed to Martin McGuinness in the Sunday Business Post as he had regarded him as being on the dovish side and close to Adams. I suggested that the hardline attitude exhibited by McGuinness in that interview might be an exercise in rehabilitation on his part, given the likelihood that his standing within the Republican movement may have suffered as a result of the recent publication by the British Government of documents relating to their secret contacts last year with Sinn Fein/IRA. The Cardinal said that this thought had also occurred to him. The Cardinal was full of praise for John Hume's statement published in yesterday's press. Even if peace fails to materialise now, he said, the joint declaration will, nevertheless, be seen as an outstanding achievement in its own right and will certainly make a huge contribution in advancing the day when peace is eventually achieved. He regarded the Forum provided for in the declaration as an extremely useful element in that it enables Sinn Fein to participate in the political process immediately after a cessation of violence, without a waiting period. The Cardinal said he was pleased to note that leaders of the Irish community in Britain had given their strong support to the joint declaration and the call for peace. (He was referring, of course, to the joint statement issued by the leaders of the Irish umbrella organisations in Britain before Christmas at the behest of, and following lunch at, the Embassy). It was important, he said, to bring as much moral pressure as

possible on the IRA to see the light and to lessen the support for them within and without Northern Ireland. The erosion of support for them was very important. The degree of real popular support for Sinn Fein and the IRA was, he maintained, substantially less than the voting figures would suggest because of fear. The presence of guns and gunmen in many nationalist areas frightened many people who in consequence were afraid to withhold their support for Sinn Fein when that was requested.

John Hume

As is clear from his recent speeches, the Cardinal is a great admirer of John Hume and the role he has played over the years. Indeed, in his speech in the Grand Committee Room of the House of Commons on 1 December, Cardinal Daly devoted a portion of his address to Hume, attributing to him much of the language now in common use by which people analyse the Northern Ireland problem and discuss possible solutions. In the course of our discussion he referred more than once to what he described as an orchestrated campaign by Independent Newspapers in Dublin to damage and destroy Hume. He knew that some prominent Irish-American businessmen had become aware of this campaign and had spoken to Tony O'Reilly about it. The Cardinal was clearly anxious to know what was the motive behind the anti-Hume campaign. He also referred to Mayhew's dislike of Hume and to Gerry Fitt's outbursts in the course of media interviews from time to time - outbursts which, he said, are clearly influenced by his blind hatred and jealousy of Hume. As already indicated, the Cardinal thought that Hume's statement of 3 January, urging the IRA to abandon violence and accept the joint declaration was opportune and good. We discussed briefly the controversy surrounding the Hume/Adams statement before Hume's departure for the United States. The Cardinal said he believed Hume was anxious to announce a suspension of his talks with Adams at that time in case another Sinn Fein Councillor or activist would be killed in his absence because of a perceived pan-nationalist front resulting from his talks with Adams. Hume did not want to have a possible death on his conscience.

Impact of Joint Declaration

The Cardinal agreed that the very constructive role of the Irish Government in the elaboration of the joint declaration would have a significant beneficial effect in Britain and in the general attitude towards Ireland and the Irish. He adverted to the fact that for weeks before the declaration issued and indeed subsequently, the Northern Ireland problem was the main focus of attention in the British media. Irish affairs were at last being taken seriously in Britain and well-informed articles and editorials were being written regularly. Gone, at least temporarily, was the lecturing, superior attitude and in its place, in the main, was informed comment. John Major had emerged from the whole exercise with his reputation enhanced and the boost to his image would, of course, be significantly greater if peace were to materialise. He told me that Cardinal Hume had written to Major before the

declaration issued, encouraging him to commit himself. Did the Cardinal feel that Major was being too one-sided in the meantime, by constantly addressing the fears and concerns of the Unionist community only? Dr Daly's reply was that at the beginning, when the joint declaration issued, it was understandable that the Prime Minister should try to ensure that he carried the Official Unionists with him. However, that concern had now passed and he would like to see a more even-handed approach by Major. As for Paisley's reaction, the Cardinal said that uncharacteristically, Paisley had left himself with no apparent fall-back position and had made himself more and more irrelevant. He thought that the Prime Minister had dealt with him quite firmly in the Commons after the declaration was published. Paisley had been exposed as having been opposed to the declaration before he read it. With regard to the meeting held in Tyrone by Sein Fein/IRA over the Christmas period with the participation of prisoners released on parole, Dr Daly said that it was a carefully staged media event for publicity purposes in the presence of certain journalists, including Mary Holland. He was surprised that a journalist of her experience and standing could have been duped so easily by the organisers. The attitude to the joint declaration in that setting was very predictable.

McBride Principles

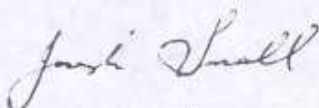
Dr Daly referred to his visit to the United States some months ago with three other Church leaders. He was particularly glad of the participation of John Dunlop, the Presbyterian leader. The Cardinal was very critical of British tactics in America in conducting a campaign against the McBride Principles. By politicising the matter in this way the British had given a welcome platform to organisations like NORaid and people like Fr Sean McManus. If the British were smarter they would have realised they were backing a loser in a liberal country like America where the content of the McBride Principles are regarded as perfectly reasonable. The Cardinal mentioned that the four Church leaders, including himself, would be issuing a joint statement later this month on the subject. The statement would not be a denunciation of the McBride Principles: it would contain an alternative formula. The real need now is new jobs. The American Catholic Hierarchy had been very helpful to the visiting Irish churchmen. Dr Daly said that with the prospect of a restoration of peace in Northern Ireland there was a growing worry about the state of the economy. There had been a rapid turnover of Ministers at the NIO dealing with the economy - one per year - and there had not been a good one since Richard Needham.

Unionist Reaction to Cardinal's Address

Dr Daly said that after delivering his speech to the Parliamentary Catholic Community in the House of Commons on 1 December he was greatly surprised when dining privately afterwards in the Commons with David Alton MP (the main organiser of the event) he was approached and complimented by the Unionist MPs John Taylor and Roy Beggs. The Cardinal said

he did not realise that they were present when he delivered his speech. I was present that evening and saw them in the Grand Committee Room. You will recall that I sent you the full text of the Cardinal's address on that occasion; it was a powerful statement of support for the peace initiative and attracted much media attention. That address, together with the substance of a homily he delivered on 21 November on the occasion of a Day of Prayer for Peace in Ireland, but with considerable later additions, has been published in booklet form in the meantime and the Cardinal presented a copy to me yesterday. A photocopy is enclosed for your information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joseph Small".

Joseph Small
Ambassador