

Dermot Nally Papers

UCDA P254/93

CONFIDENTIAL

Business (on return) P254/93

Do see please

JH 13/7/94

Telephone conversation with John Hume

12 July, 1994

1. John Hume rang me from London airport to say that he had had a private meeting with Prime Minister Major earlier this morning. This is one of a series of meetings with Northern party leaders which Major intends to have over the next few weeks.
2. The main topic for discussion was current work between the two Governments on Constitutional issues. Hume took the view that the controversy about Articles 2 and 3 had "come out of the woodwork" only in recent times. He told Major that nationalists could easily set as a precondition the remedying of their grievances under the British Constitution (Monarch required to be Protestant, Anglican Bishops in House of Lords, etc.). They accepted however that these inherited forms did not mean any current sectarianism. The position was similar with Articles 2 and 3. They had little practical significance, but to change them could be deeply controversial.
3. Hume's overall position was that a change to the Irish Constitution would depend on the nature of any agreement reached. If there was a deep and satisfactory new Agreement, they could be changed in that context. Such a new Agreement could also be used to get rid of the Government of Ireland Act, which had failed and should be totally replaced.
4. Major asked him whether, if a framework document were agreed, it should be published before talking to the parties or, possibly, after talking to them. Hume took no rigid position on this.

5. Major asked Hume for his current assessment of the Peace Process, and what his reaction would be if it failed. Hume said there was an intensive debate within the Republican movement and it would be premature to jump to conclusions. If however the response was negative, the two Governments should press ahead with a new agreement and put it to a referendum of the people of Ireland, North and South, on the same day.



Sean O hUiginn

12 July, 1994

PST, PSS, Joint Sec, Amb Small
cc. Mr F. Murray Dr N. Mawley Mr T. Dalton