

CONFIDENTIAL

Phone call from Seamus Mallon

19 March 1996

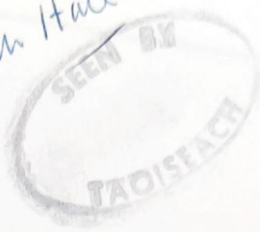
1. Seamus Mallon rang me back this afternoon to brief me on the meeting the SDLP had with the Secretary of State.
2. The meeting was brief and "innocuous and perfunctory".
3. The British side had made clear they wished only to discuss the "ground-rules paper". They had refused to be drawn on the elective issue and had given no indication of their thinking or intentions.
4. In the discussion on the ground-rules paper the SDLP voiced some reservations about the provision for observers (on the grounds that it could draw invidious distinctions between small parties with guns and others) and also on the provision for "sufficient consensus", (the SDLP point being that sufficient consensus was being roundly ignored by the British in their handling of the elective process).

Note: Although the SDLP had got no indication at their meeting of the "hybrid" system to be used, we are getting some hints that the British have been looking at the German mixed system. They are to give us a paper after 7.00 pm this evening which will, presumably, set out their thinking more clearly.

Sean Ó hUiginn

19 March 1996

Mr Hume



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Fax to Seamus
cc 19/3 PST, PSS,
Mr Donlon,
Dallan
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