

RESTRICTED

FROM: HM AMBASSADOR
British Embassy, Dublin

DATE: 23 July 1996

cc: PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B
PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Hill - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Wood (L&B) - B
Mr Lamont, RID - B
Mr Holmes - by fax
Mr Budd - by fax

PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B

IGC: 18 JULY: FOLLOW-UP IN DUBLIN

1. You might welcome a readout of where things stand in Dublin following last week's IGC meeting. The following is based on a number of contacts we have had here, both with members of the Irish delegation to those talks, and with the likes of Paddy Teahon (with whom I had breakfast this morning).

IGC: Reactions

2. Much as we anticipated, the flavour of the Irish press reporting was that of "agreement to disagree", based in large part on background briefing by O hUiginn. Nevertheless, there appears to be a general sense here that the talks in London on 18 July went a considerable way to getting the bilateral relationship back on track. Finlay (Labour Party) said that the Tanaiste saw the episode in terms of the "mutual incomprehension" that periodically besets Anglo/Irish relations (which is longhand for saying that any differences are not being taken too tragically) while Teahon said that the Prime Minister's reply to the Taoiseach's letter had been well-received. It will however take some time for feelings (on both sides) to subside; in the meantime, the Irish will be looking to us for reassurance that we are taking them into our confidence on those issues they see as crucial to an effective working relationship.

RESTRICTED

29/7/96
Mr Webb
Mr Sean

RESTRICTED

Apprentice Boys Parade

3. The number one priority from them in this is clearly the talks. Events there are moving far too fast for me to add value on thinking in Dublin. But close behind on the Irish list of priorities is undoubtedly the question of the Apprentice Boys parade in Londonderry on 10 August. They have already been briefed on our efforts both at the talks in London and at Maryfield but they will want to see an intensification of that information flow and robust arrangements for consultation as the event draws near. For their part, they will continue to counsel restraint, discouraging any hopes being fomented by the recently formed coalition of residents groups (as well as Sinn Fein) that a comprehensive settlement on marching can be reached in the context of a satisfactory Apprentice Boys parade accommodation. The next significant step in that lobbying campaign, Teahon told me in confidence, will be a visit by O hUiginn to Londonderry this weekend.

Review of Marches

4. In parallel with this, they are clearly looking to further consultation on the details of the proposed review before we go public on its terms of reference. We have given them no encouragement on this - far from it - but it has to be said that this has been a universal theme in our recent contacts. If we do not take them further into our confidence before any wide dissemination of the details of our approach, I judge that their hitherto studied neutrality on the review may well lapse.

Future of the All Party Talks

5. The Irish side are also giving some thought to the question of how to keep the talks on track into the autumn, should there be 'sufficient consensus' to take us that far. Their natural inclination, post-Drumcree, is to concentrate on looking for ways of reassuring the nationalist community. For some, like O'hUiginn, that will mean moving the re-organisation of the RUC quickly up the agenda (as he has briefed the press). For cooler heads, some broader move to underline our real commitment to 'parity of esteem' and a parallel willingness to engage in constructive dialogue on the recent Hume/Adams initiative would suffice (this latter a clear and insistent message from both Teahon and Finlay posited on August, passing without further serious disturbance). Yet there is also a general acceptance, usefully reinforced by the IGC in London last week, that substantive progress will also depend on doing something to encourage the Unionists out of their deep-seated defensiveness. Confusion, if not outright disillusionment, over the role Trimble wants to play is now pretty much universal and our various interlocutors are by no means convinced of the argument, much bruited here, that

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

Drumcree has temporarily reinforced his negotiating hand. But they recognise that they have to think longer term as well. One key issue in that context - the revision of Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 Constitution - has come back onto the screen here with the replaying of David Goodall's recent letter to the Times, which was even picked up by the editorial page of this weekend's Sunday Tribune. From my discussions with Teahon this morning, he gave the strong impression that such a change might well be possible on the road to, rather than in the context of, a more general agreement: he inferred that the proposition that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed might be mistaken. However, much would depend on what was on offer for the nationalists.

Possible Moves in the DFA

6. Finally some gossip, for what it's worth. Rumours of O hUiginn's impending departure for Washington continue to circulate here. This morning Teahon insisted that they were unfounded. It may well be that O hUiginn will be moving on in the not too distant future, but if he does, an EU Post or the Vatican (his likely preference) seem more probable destinations. Dermot Gallagher's return from Washington, when it happens, will see him installed either in O hUiginn's seat (which is why the rumours began) or, more likely, as the successor to Paddy McKernan.

Comment

7. There are to main messages from all of this:

- i) a clear plea for intensified communication between the two Governments both on policy issues, and on practicalities (ie contacts with the communities about marching);
- ii) the Irish would see advantage in British officials resuming exploratory contacts with Sinn Fein if the first half of August passes without disaster.

(Signed)

V Sutherland

AMBASSADOR

RESTRICTED