

Dermot Nally Papers

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Christmas Message



Picture by Austin Finn
Natalie Gallagher (6), Henrietta Street, Dublin, at the New Consensus collecting of Christmas Cards and signing of Messages of Peace, from the people of Dublin to the people of Northern Ireland, at the Christmas Tree, in Grafton Street.

Hume confirms secret meeting with SF leader

By GEORGE JACKSON

SDLP leader, John Hume last night confirmed that he had a secret meeting with Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, their first joint meeting since last Wednesday's Downing Street declaration.

Mr Hume said both he and Mr Adams were committed to continuing their peace process.

"We met obviously to discuss last Wednesday's Joint Declaration and we have made clear that we will continue our commitment to the peace process and we will meet again to review future developments when Sinn Féin carry out, as they have said they are doing, their in depth consideration of the situation", said Mr Hume.

"Given the nature of their organisation, I expect them to do so in depth and naturally my hope is that at

the end of the day their response will be a positive one", said the SDLP leader.

Asked on what he based his hope Mr Hume replied "As I have said repeatedly I have been engaged in very intensive dialogue with Mr Adams over a long period of time to the point where we were able to say that we had made substantial progress on a peace process."

"I have said throughout that when you are engaged in that type of intensive dialogue, you can make your own judgement. I have made my judgement very clear that Mr Adams is very serious and so are the people that he is representing in their commitment to bring the conflict to a total end."

"I have said throughout this that I am not a messenger for the IRA or Sinn Féin. My hope is that there will be a total cessation of violence and

that the detailed consideration that is now going on within their ranks will lead to that. That is my hope and my prayer", said Mr Hume.

BERNADETTE McALISKEY, the former nationalist MP, said the Major-Reynolds declaration had spread fear and despair in both communities and would not lead to a solution.

Mrs McAliskey said she saw nothing in their declaration which, she said, meant "absolutely nothing".

She told BBC Radio Ulster she believed the intent of the 12 point declaration was to "look as if you are doing something while doing nothing".

Mrs McAliskey said people had been caught up in a whirlwind where people were starting to believe things were happening which were not.

Taoiseach to take action on security if the initiative fails

BY KEN WHELAN

ALBERT REYNOLDS said there was no available military solution for either side to the Northern conflict but he did not rule out the possibility that new and harsher security measures might be taken by both Governments if the Declaration was rejected.

The Taoiseach, however, dismissed internment as an option by Dublin and London to a rejection by the paramilitaries. Internment, he said, had acted as a recruiting agent for the paramilitaries.

In an RTE interview last night he called on the IRA to pursue the legitimate aspirations of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland around the new initiative.

The Downing Street Declaration accepted the self determination demands of the nationalist communities north and south, he said and he urged Sinn Féin and the Provos to turn their backs on violence and pursue political dialogue.

Mr Reynolds intimated that most of what was contained in the John Hume-Gerry Adams dialogue of the past year was contained in the Declaration.

The Downing Street Declaration was just the beginning of the peace process, he said and he warned that there was still a good distance to go.

The Taoiseach called on both Northern communities to sit around the table and work out their mutual futures.

Mr Reynolds, who was being interviewed by Brian Farrell on RTE television, added that there was no "quick fix" solution to Northern Ireland but he emphasised that the declaration was a start to the solution of the conflict.

Mr Reynolds said his approach to Northern Ireland required an even-handed approach and he added that this was contained in the Declaration.

He described the Declaration as open-handed, pragmatic, logical and common-sensical.

The Taoiseach said he was unwilling to condemn the Irish people north and south to another 25 or 50 years of conflict.

The past 25 years of conflict had not advanced anything.

"Unity is fine but you have to unite people before you unite territory," he said.

Mr Reynolds ruled out internment without trial as a response by Dublin and



Albert Reynolds

London to a rejection by the paramilitaries to the Declaration.

Internment, he said, had acted as a recruiting agent for the paramilitaries in the past and that was a big mistake.

Mr Reynolds did not

dismiss the probability that new and harsher security measures might be taken by both Governments if the declaration was rejected.

Mr Reynolds saw outside help arriving within the European Union context and welcomed President Delors' commitment of European financial aid for Ireland in the event of a peace settlement.

Mr Reynolds praised the role taken by Mr Major in the negotiations.

Mr Major brought no baggage to the table, he said, and was open to considering the lack of understanding which the British had brought to the problem in the context of misinterpreting how Irish people thought, the psychology of Irish people, the psychology of the fight for Irish freedom.

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IRA prisoners to play crucial role in any peace deal

By DIARMAID MacDERMOTT

THE IRA prisoners in Britain and Ireland will play a crucial role in whether the movement accepts the joint peace declaration.

The prospects of early release for the IRA prisoners is one of the factors which would greatly influence the leadership to accept a peace deal.

While neither the British or Irish governments have made public any decision on the prisoners, the IRA leadership will want guarantees that in the event of a cessation of violence the prisoners issue will be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

A large number of IRA prisoners in the Maze are due to be temporarily released this week for Christmas.

It is likely they will be consulted closely by the republican movement on what attitude should be adopted towards the peace declaration.

There are now around 480

IRA prisoners in jails in Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic.

By far the largest group are the inmates of the Maze prison outside Belfast.

The prisoners there are kept in constant touch with the IRA leadership on the outside through well established lines of communications which have existed for years.

The current Officer Commanding the IRA prisoners in the Maze is a Belfast man from the Twinbrook area serving a life sentence.

He will pass on to the prisoners the views formed by the IRA leadership on any peace deal.

But unlike the period of the hunger strikes in 1980 and 1981, the prisoners will not determine the leadership's decision.

One republican source said yesterday "The prisoners will accept whatever orders come in from the outside."

"It's not like the hunger strike when the prisoners themselves embarked on a course of action which was against the IRA leadership's own wishes."

"The prisoners are a disciplined lot who will obey the leadership, whatever decision is reached."

It is known that many of the prisoners are personally in favour of the IRA reaching a peace deal with Britain.

They are hopeful that any deal with Britain will result in their early release.

There are around 30 republican prisoners in jails in Britain including Patrick Magee, convicted of the 1984 Brighton bombing. Danny

had five years for explosives offences, the Balcombe Street unit, and Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer serving long sentences for conspiracy to cause explosions.

It is thought that in the event of the IRA accepting the deal, the prisoners in Britain will immediately be transferred to Northern Ireland.

Their sentences will then be reviewed and many who have served long years in jail could expect an early release.

Overall the IRA would want immediate release for a large number of prisoners followed by the staggered release perhaps over a period of several years of the remaining inmates.

The authorities in the Republic would also be expected to follow suit.

Democratic Left's warning to Sinn Fein

By KEN WHELAN

DEMOCRATIC LEFT leader, Deputy Prinsias de Bova said last night that Sinn Fein and Gerry Adams should not be allowed to pick and choose about what they find acceptable in the Downing Street declaration.

He also warned that Sinn Fein should not be given an indefinite amount of time to deliberate on whether to take up the peace offer as the opportunity which now exists for progress may not last.

EAMONN HOLMES profiles the four leading Irish officials who helped to negotiate the Joint Declaration.



■ NOEL DORR

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DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs Secretary Noel Dorr has been at the centre of every major Irish foreign policy initiative for the past 20 years. He has worked closely with a number of Taoiseach since the early '70s.

He admits the Northern problem has been his passionate interest over the years since his involvement in the negotiations for the Sunningdale Agreement.

A reticent, unassuming and self-effacing man, he has described his position as "a cross between a dignitary and a minion."

While ambassador to London, he was one of four officials — Dermot Nally was another — involved in the protracted negotiations which led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. A close colleague said of him at the time: "He ate and drank, slept and dreamt the agreement."

Mr Dorr was Ireland's permanent representative to the UN when the Taoiseach of the day, Mr Charles Haughey, involved Ireland in controversial action during the Falklands/Malvinas war in 1982. As President of the UN Security Council in April, 1981, and August, 1982, he led important initiatives on Namibia and Lebanon respectively.

He was assistant secretary and then deputy secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs from 1974 to 1980 when he became Ireland's Permanent Representative to the UN, a position he held until 1983.

He was Irish ambassador to London from 1983 to 1987 when he returned home to take up his present position.



■ MARTIN MANSERGH

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THE disclosure on the BBC's Panorama programme that Dr Martin Mansergh was the Taoiseach's key channel of communications to the paramilitaries on both sides revealed the pivotal role he played in the recent discussions for the Irish Government.

Dr Mansergh has been a leading figure in Fianna Fail for over a decade but his strongly nationalist approach left him a lonely figure at times.

A historian by training Dr Mansergh is an unlikely member of the green wing of Fianna Fail. He is an Anglo-Irish, English-educated, Protestant from a landed family in Tipperary.

The Mansergh family have been landowners at Grenane, near Tipperary town, since the 1700s and have been leading members of the Church of Ireland in the area.

He was born in Surrey in 1935, and educated at Canterbury and then Oxford University.

He came to Ireland to join the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974 where he came to the notice of Charles Haughey who invited him to join the Taoiseach's office when he took power in 1980. His duties involved speech writing and dealing with Anglo-Irish matters.

When Mr Haughey took the very unusual step for a career diplomat by resigning his position to work as an advisor to the Fianna Fail leader, he has been in that position since, remaining to serve Albert Reynolds.



■ SEÁN Ó HUIGINN

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LITTLE is known of Sean O hUiginn, the fourth member of the Irish negotiating team, and the Department of Foreign Affairs is giving away no information about him.

He is the former Irish representative at the Anglo-Irish Secretariat at Maryfield which arose from the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

He now is the head of the Anglo-Irish section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and is seen as one of the key players in drawing up Government policy on Northern Ireland.

The department yesterday declined to provide any further biographical details of Mr O hUiginn, pointing out that it is not the practice to release such details about civil servants.

"Civil servants act on behalf of the Minister of their Department and not on their own initiative, and it would be inappropriate for them to appear to take credit," a spokesman said.

DERMOT NALLY

DERMOT NALLY has had little time to concentrate on his golf handicap since his retirement from the Taoiseach's Department at the end of last year due to his involvement in the crucial negotiations which led to last week's Joint Declaration.

Regarded as the "perfect civil servant," he served five of the State's nine Taoiseach in 10 governments over the past 20 years.

His proudest achievement is the part he played in hammering out the Anglo-Irish Agreement with his British counterpart Sir Robert Armstrong. He is credited with the final draft of Article 1 (a) which conceded for the first time in Irish history that "any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of the majority of the

people of Northern Ireland."

He spent the last 12 years in the Cabinet Room, sitting beside the Taoiseach at the top table, meticulously recording the political decisions of the day. His diary of those years would make interesting reading, but as a firm supporter of the Supreme Court decision on Cabinet confidentiality, it is unlikely he will spill many secrets.

He attended every European summit meeting, except one, since Ireland joined the EC in 1972 and was the only civil servant present at every meeting of heads of Government since 1980.

He was renowned for the good relationship he enjoyed with Mrs Thatcher.

Christmas Eve jailhouse party raises hackles

From GREG HARKIN in Belfast

THE British Government is to throw a Christmas Eve party for inmates and their children at a 'model' prison in the North.

The Northern Ireland Office confirmed yesterday it has called in Santa Claus to hand out presents to the kids at Maghaberry on Friday afternoon.

Its first such event in the history of the prison system in Britain or Northern Ireland.

But the historic seasonal gesture at the Co Antrim jail has angered inmates at two other prisons.

Prisoners at the Maze and Belfast's Crumlin Road establishments are fuming at the NIO's lack of goodwill towards them.

A spokesman for loyalists said: "It's scandalous that some prisoners are to meet their families at a Christmas party inside a jail, while others are being ignored."

"We are not pleased and we've told the various governors of our feelings."

The inmates at Maze and HMP Belfast are supported by Belfast Deputy Lord Mayor Hugh Smyth.

Alderman Smyth, an independent unionist, said: "All prisoners should have the same rights. This will be particularly cruel for inmates at the Crumlin Road where people are on remand."

And William Smith of the loyalist prisoners group Justice For All added: "The authorities are once again being totally unreasonable about this matter."

"Why should the group of prisoners get such a privilege when others are ignored?" he asked.

The Northern Ireland Office however has defended the Santa Claus party for inmates at Maghaberry.

A spokesman said the idea started last year with a Christmas Eve visit by children of women prisoners.

"It was decided to extend it to male inmates this year. This is the first time this has happened inside any prison in the United Kingdom," he said.

"It may be extended in the future, but it is still at an experimental stage," the spokesman added.

Its understood senior prison officers felt the Maze and Belfast Prison were not suitable for a large children's party.

The bash at Maghaberry, where loyalists and republicans live in an integrated system, will be held in the prison gymnasium.