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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

SECRET

Meeting with the British Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher,
the Hague, 27th June, 1986

The Taoiseach met the Prime Minister in the Irish delegation room in the Hague immediately on the conclusion of the European Council. She was accompanied by her Private Secretary, Mr Powell. The Taoiseach was accompanied by the undersigned. The meeting went on for approximately half an hour.

Although these notes are in the form of direct speech, they do not purport to be an exact quotation.

Thatcher:

You start: I'll listen.

Taoiseach:

Before I get to the main purpose of the meeting, I would like to mention some concerns we have with the Libyans. You know the public statement they made recently of support for the IRA. We asked our Ambassador to call and seek a retraction. His initial interview with the Chief of Protocol was most unsatisfactory. His attitude was totally unacceptable including his references to yourself, which we have communicated to your people.

The Foreign Office rejected our Note and we have asked the Ambassador to call again on Saturday - without any real expectation that there will be a retraction. This will mean that we must consider next week what steps we are to take. We would need a formal public statement by Jalloud withdrawing the earlier statement of support for the IRA. Action by us, if that is decided, will be difficult - we export approximately £30m worth of meat there, equivalent to exports of about £1b from the UK. There may be a question of expulsion of some students or perhaps UN action. But even these would not produce the effect we want.

I understand that the terms of the Ambassador's interview has been conveyed to your people.

Powell:

That is correct, Prime Minister. But we have not had an opportunity to brief you yet.

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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

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Taoiseach:

No matter what we do it seems likely that the Libyans will continue to try to provide money for the IRA. They are already involved in this - and in measures which look close to extortion from an Irish citizen. They have involved at least one other person in this - an Italian. I am not at all sure that any action we take will produce the sort of result we want; but I am not satisfied to continue with the present situation.

Thatcher:

Jalloud - this is the man who seems to have taken over from Ghadaffi. I hear that he is even more pro-Russian than Ghadaffi.

Taoiseach:

The important thing is to stop the flow of money from Libya, as has effectively happened with the US.

Thatcher:

You have done a fantastic job there.

Taoiseach:

Perhaps the biggest potential source of funds for the IRA now is Libya. Some of this is already being used for political purposes in this country.

On the Agreement, we are very happy with your solidarity on it. Some people - I remember, in particular, the Presbyterians - have said that you and I differ on the interpretation and have called for clarification. A point may come about where this would be desirable. We could say that the Agreement does not represent joint authority and make clear again what it does mean. We could jointly state what the Agreement does and does not do. This sort of statement could help those who are getting tired of Paisley.

Thatcher:

I am always very hesitant about putting a gloss on things. The reaction to it among Protestants has been negative and very dangerous. But it seems to be easing over time. They have now lost the Assembly and they will not talk about devolution. Their answer to everything is "no". We abolished the Assembly because it was not carrying out its proper function of vetting the executive. We have not got very much out of John Hume either.

Taoiseach:

He is hesitant about getting back into the same old racket again. He does not want to go into the Assembly without an agreement on what is to happen there.

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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

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Taoiseach:

We are conscious of your worries about the marching season and the Summer. For that reason we have not pressed about doing certain things under the Agreement now. We have accepted all that. The present position is therefore that actual delivery under the Agreement is limited. But a number of things must begin to happen after the marching season. The IRA are already beginning to take benefit from the lack of action. Even the Unionists are claiming credit for things not happening under the Agreement. We see that the balance of advantage lies in this course now, but after the Summer things must begin to happen under the Agreement.

Thatcher:

The Unionists are saying they have lost everything and got nothing.

Taoiseach:

Yes. Even the Unionists are saying now about the Nationalists "They have got nothing". It is very important that in the Autumn there should be progress in specific areas.

Thatcher:

To some extent that depends on what John Hume does.

Taoiseach:

John Hume has generally done what he has been asked to do such as issuing invitations to the Unionists to talks on devolution. He even appeared on tv in the South in favour of divorce. The issue on which an awful lot now hinges is the Courts, although we also need the code of conduct for the RUC. There are many who believe that it would have been better if the relevant passage had been published soon after the Agreement. Then steps must be taken to ensure that the UDR are accompanied by the RUC in their contacts with the public, as envisaged in the Hillsborough communique. We realise the pressures that the RUC are under - but non-implementation of this will be a problem if it continues - bearing in mind what is in the communique. We have not even got data since March. We recognise the problems, but think that they must be faced more frankly.

But the most crucial area of all is the Courts. There must be action there to improve confidence in the administration of justice. We are looking to the proposal for three-man courts. That should not be controversial in Northern Ireland.

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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

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Thatcher:

That is not necessarily so. I cannot do anything which would cast doubt on the validity of the Courts. Then, we haven't got the judges. I can only act here on the instigation of Lord Justice Lowry. I can only do what you want at the request of the judges. The Northern Ireland judges are marvellous. They have gone on with their job despite the dangers.

Taoiseach:

Yes, I know the number of Catholic judges who have been murdered. But we could find additional judges - and we must have the three-man courts, particularly after the fiasco of the recent extradition cases. In no less than five cases recently the British authorities made a mess of the proceedings. They now admit how badly wrong they were in the Glenholmes cases. Insofar as Burns was concerned we had the man in prison for 18 months and then you found there was no evidence against him although this is not publicly known.

We are willing to push the Extradition Act in the Autumn but we cannot do this unless there are three-judge courts in Northern Ireland.

Thatcher:

I can't do that except at the request of the judges. Isn't the Black case coming up for judgement soon? The Agreement has produced nothing for us except problems. We haven't got a single thing going for us in Northern Ireland.

Taoiseach:

There is constant contact between the Gardai and the RUC. We know that security co-operation is now very good. We are very anxious to get the Extradition Act in the Autumn

Thatcher:

Without derogation?

Taoiseach:

Without reservation, if we are not constrained by a forthcoming constitutional case. The judgement on Russell in the High Court was a most unfortunate judgement. We have appealed it and if we succeed I will take all the political risks and seek to get the Act through without reservations. But this will not be possible unless we get the three-judge courts.

Thatcher:

You know the problem I have with the Unionists. Paisley's last remarks were intolerable.

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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

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Taoiseach:

There is a shift in the opinion of ordinary people in Northern Ireland. Paisley is failing to get large numbers at his demonstrations. There is a lot of unhappiness about him among ordinary people. If he follows the road of violence he will turn more people off. We are grateful for the firmness with which the British Government has handled the situation.

Thatcher:

We will go firmly. We need the Extradition Act, without derogation. I appreciate that police co-operation is excellent.

Taoiseach:

There is one other question - the international fund.

Thatcher:

The \$50m seems to be alright.

Taoiseach:

But what I am concerned about now is that there should be something under a Community umbrella, not as part of the Budget, to which countries could contribute. You will be seeing Mulroney on 13th July. I understand from Lange that the New Zealanders also want to help. There must be some way around the difficulties in the Community where many countries are positively anxious to help and cannot understand that they are not being approached.

The Prime Minister seemed to go along with this idea but did not say anything. She simply smiled and gestured with her hands.

A copy of the statement issued after the meeting is attached.



2 July 1986

Copy to:

Tanaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Justice, Attorney General, Ambassador Dorr, and Messrs Ward, Donlon, Russell, Lillis and O Tuathail.