



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2017/10/56
Creation Dates:	30 June 1987
Extent and medium:	5 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

CONFIDENTIAL

*by 'Gangly' H. K. War 30.6.87
v. 2. 87 2/17*

Meeting between the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister
Mrs Thatcher, Brussels, 30 June 1987

The meeting took place in the delegation rooms in the Charlemagne from approximately 9.30 a.m. to approximately 9.50 a.m. Its tone was friendly. The Prime Minister was obviously preoccupied with the business of the Council which was due to start at 10.00 a.m.

Prime Minister: The dinner last night was one of the worst I have ever experienced. I have the feeling that people are trying to bounce me. Of course this won't happen. I believe that the Republic has some problems economically. I should be interested to hear about your approach to these.

Taoiseach: In many ways, we are right up against the wall. We have serious problems with public finances. There is a large budget deficit, unemployment, no economic growth.

Prime Minister: The situation in Northern Ireland is terrible. Terrorism is continuing even under the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I intend to implement that Agreement. My intention is very firm. At the same time, I cannot stress enough how disaffected the unionists are. They make noises about talks from time to time but when we get down to finding out what they are about it turns out to be something in place of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I did not expect the extent of this disaffection at the time I signed the Agreement. I thought that the document had all the requisite guarantees up front. But it is not logic but emotion that governs their actions. I thought they would accept the guarantees for their future. But no ... they say that the Agreement enables another State to come in - even though the Agreement itself says that each Government is responsible for all things within its own area.

The SDLP are not as helpful as they could be. They sit back as if they think they have all the power - relying on Dublin.

I will do as much as I can to emphasise that the Anglo-Irish Agreement stands and it stands and it stands.

Everyone says "you would be quite alright without the Agreement". A lot depends on how you handle it. I am sure we must treat it with kid gloves. It is a thing that common sense does not enter into.

The number of murders by the IRA recently is enormous.

There have been a large volume of representations on the subject. I was in Scotland recently and we experienced it there. Yesterday coming into this building I saw a lot of "big green things". I thought these were Irish flags and another protest!

Taoiseach:

On your major point of concern, we will of course handle the Agreement sensitively. You will have noticed that we have been very reticent on the question since the general election. We will continue to do that. I certainly will not exacerbate the situation.

You should know that you are the first British Prime Minister who has said to the unionists there must be progress. You have stood firm and that is an historic contribution to Anglo-Irish relations. You must not forget that. You did not, like Prime Minister Wilson, for example, back down; it is very important that they understand the position.

Prime Minister:

When we were drawing up the Agreement, we were led to believe that as a result the minority community would not harbour the IRA. But the security situation has got worse. It is all very worrying.

Taoiseach: I agree with you but the IRA are attacking a large number of soft targets. That situation has certainly got worse in that respect. But cross-border security has got better. There are intense discussions going on at present and these will continue.

Prime Minister: I can understand that you have trouble with resources.

Taoiseach: (Jokingly) If you would lend us £2 billion or so ...! It is very difficult for us when we are cutting public expenditure very severely to allocate so much to security but we are doing what we have to.

Prime Minister: The trouble is that mortars can be put in position on the other side of the border to attack security forces and people on our side

Taoiseach: We can deal with that very effectively. The problem is that they can now use mortars in the middle of Belfast. The system is in place on the Border however. Co-operation is very good.

There is a far better flow of information. The communications between the two forces have improved.

Prime Minister: What we need is pre-emptive intelligence which prevents these attacks - .

You and I have a very busy day ahead of us.

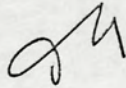
Taoiseach: When things settle down, we could perhaps talk through our respective aides as to whether there are ways in which we can make progress and also placate the unionists.

We will be asked if we have arranged a further meeting. If we are I intend to say that we meet whenever it is appropriate and, anyway, normally meet at these Councils.

Prime Minister: Yes "appropriate" is the right word. I agree with that approach.

There was then a brief discussion about the text of the statement on the meeting, which is attached.

Private Secretary Charles Powell attended with the Prime Minister.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'JP' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

30 June 1987

c.c. Secretary N Dorr

c.c. Secretary D Mathews

European Council Brussels

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach had a very useful and constructive discussion of current issues. They committed themselves to continued co-operation within the framework of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and to all possible measures to defeat terrorism.

30 June 1987