



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Overview of Conference Agenda, Belfast, 17th June, 1988

West Belfast Package

1. Work is well advanced on a £10m (extra funding) package for "areas of Belfast characterised by exceptionally high unemployment and poor rates of economic activity". In practice, most of this will go to nationalist West Belfast, although the Shankill will also benefit to some degree. The package is likely to be repeated, probably at a higher level, in future years. We might ask the Secretary of State for a fairly detailed outline of its contents.
2. Mr. King will be making a detailed announcement on the package, probably at the end of the month. It is important, therefore, (and the Secretariat advise that there should be no difficulty about this) that this announcement be both clearly signalled in the Communique and directly related by it to the Conference. The Belfast initiative had emerged from the (particularly successful) March Conference and it has won considerable credit for the Government in nationalist circles.

Fair Employment

3. We have advanced this issue in a particularly effective way and it is in many ways a model of how the Conference and Secretariat can be made to operate successfully. There are indeed indications that Sinn Fein are concerned about the degree of success the Conference has achieved on this issue.

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4. We might say to the Secretary of State that to date we have achieved 85% agreement but it is vital that we get the remaining issues right. In particular, it is extremely important that the rather weak approach of the White Paper to goals and timetables be firmed up. After all, these do not affect the existing workforce but apply only to applications, recruitment (new jobs) and promotions. The US lobby, in particular, is likely to base its assessment of the British proposals on the strength and perceived effectiveness of the approach to goals and timetables.
5. The Conference might ask officials to resume their examination of the remaining areas of disagreement and to report back to the next meeting.

International Fund

6. The Communique might welcome the European reaction to the joint approach by both Governments. It should also signal that the July Conference will review the operation of the Fund (the Board itself will be reviewing and probably redirecting its priorities at a special meeting on the 8th September).
7. The Fund is now coming to the end of the first "phase" of its activities (with programmes on the ground and funding allocated to them) and there is a developing view (including in the Board) that the new funding coming on stream (including \$35m this year) should be directed differently. In particular, it is felt that a new Disadvantaged Areas programme (e.g. West Belfast, S. Armagh, Shankill, Derry/Strabane) should be put in place and be allocated a very significant percentage of new funding.
8. The Conference might ask officials to try and draw up an agreed paper for the next Conference (we have a draft paper

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almost ready on our side).

Baker/Mawhinney Proposals on Education

9. The problem is that these proposals would down-grade Irish in the educational system, in particular by excluding Irish from the central curriculum of foundation subjects and forcing it to compete for curriculum time with a further modern language. This contrasts with the treatment of Welsh which is regarded as a foundation subject, even for Welsh students whose mother tongue is English.
10. The Secretariat suggest three possibilities:
 - to make Irish the modern language option within the foundation subjects;
 - to make it an optional foundation subject; and
 - to create a separate foundation subject, e.g. Irish Studies, which would include a linguistic component.
11. In a meeting recently with Mr. O Huiginn, Dr. Mawhinney, while ruling out the first two options, seemed interested in, and prepared to consider, the Irish Studies approach. Realistically, it might be the best approach to adopt though it would have to have a strong language component and not be seen in any way as in competition to, or involving the down-grading of, Irish.
12. The Communique should signal our active interest in this issue and the fact that consultations are continuing between us on it.

Eamhain Macha (Navan Fort)

13. Eamhain Macha (situated two miles west of Armagh City) is one of Ireland's foremost historic monuments. The Northern

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Ireland Department of Environment manage it. We are at present concerned about the effect on the fort of continuing quarrying at an adjacent site and would be grateful for the British view of how this might best be dealt with (in fairness to the Department of Environment, they have refused permission for an expansion of the quarrying facilities).

Security Cooperation

14. This, as is the practice, will be dealt with in restricted session. The topics to be covered are likely to include those set out in the recent papers sent down by Minister Stanley, as well as the whole issue of pre-emptive intelligence (on which the British focussed very strongly at last Friday's Nally/Butler group meeting in London).

Extradition

15. This will undoubtedly be raised. We might respond by referring to the Taoiseach's message, the Minister for Justice's statement, the valuable contact between the Attorneys-General and our immediate move to prepare the "case stated". If pushed, we might consider saying that we will of course be reviewing the operation of our extradition legislation before December (as required under the 1987 Act). This, however, would need to be balanced by emphasising that the Portlaoise identification problem arose under a provision of the 1965 Act and was not related in any way to the 1987 legislation.

Lifers/SOSPs

16. We might welcome the recent decision to review the cases of all Special Category Prisoners (i.e. those sentenced for offences committed before 1976). We might also urge that an announcement might be made that the cases of all remaining

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SOSPs will also be reviewed. We should try and have this review process linked firmly into the Conference and the work of the Secretariat.

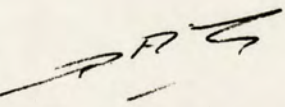
Marching Season

17. We could pay a fulsome tribute to the handling of last year's marching season by the RUC. We might then go on to ask for an assessment, based on RUC intelligence, of the likely situation this year. Officials on both sides should in particular try to identify potential flash-points and ensure that action is taken in advance which would head off trouble. We are, for instance, quite worried about recent disturbances, arising from marches, in Duncairn Gardens in North Belfast (a traditional marching route but an area which has now become almost exclusively nationalist) and have raised in the Secretariat a march which is to be held there today (Friday).

Stalker-Sampson/Gibraltar

18. We might enquire about the progress of the Kelly disciplinary investigation. We had expected the report to have been submitted shortly after Easter. As regards Gibraltar, we might ask about the likely timing of the inquest.




Dermot Gallagher,
16 June, 1988.

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SPEAKING POINTS

WEST BELFAST

We have both won considerable political credit, across the divide, for the initiative on West Belfast announced at the March Conference. I believe your people have done a lot of good work in the meantime on putting a package together. We appreciate that this is not an easy task and that good proposals can be difficult to find and develop. Perhaps you would fill us in on the measures in the package and the likely timing of its detailed announcement.

[At a later stage]

I would particularly like to emphasise the importance for the political standing and credibility of the Conference of giving a strong, positive and united signal about this package to-day. I know we are at one on this and that we can trust the Joint Secretary to find the right formula.

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West Belfast - Steering Note

The economic development of West Belfast was raised by us at the past two Conferences, 25 March and 4 May.

At the May Conference, the Secretary of State confirmed that "work is well advanced on ways to address the serious economic and social problems of West Belfast". We understand the Northern Ireland Departments presented a study of the problem to the Secretary of State as far back as early May.

At meetings between Sir Kenneth Bloomfield (head of the N.I. Civil Service) and Sean O Huiginn at the Secretariat in Belfast on 1 June and 14 June, Bloomfield said that the NIO now recognised that there were major problems in West Belfast which would have to be addressed but contended that a balance had to be struck between the requirements of West Belfast and those of other disadvantaged areas in the North. He revealed that they were putting together a programme with budget of £10m (extra money) "for areas of Belfast characterised by exceptionally high unemployment and poor rates of economic activity". It would be coordinated by a Special Action Unit headed by a senior NIO official. He suggested that the allocation could be increased in subsequent years. The £10m would be spent on employment generating projects, health, education and environment. It is understood that local organisations such the West Belfast Enterprise Board and the Phoenix Trust will be involved.

Secretary of State King will probably make a detailed announcement at the end of the month. In the meantime, it is understood that he would be willing to brief the Conference in detail on the initiative.

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SPEAKING POINTS

IRISH LANGUAGE

- Article 5 of the Agreement speaks of the rights, the identities and the cultural heritage of the two traditions in Northern Ireland. The Irish language is an important part of the nationalist identity and heritage. There is a danger, and I'm afraid this has been happening to some degree, that language issues in the North have been hijacked by Sinn Féin. We need to ensure that we do not give them any more openings.

- We are pleased that some progress has been made over the past two years in granting a degree of recognition to the language but much remains to be done. For instance we cannot understand why there has been no movement in regard to the Local Government Act of 1949 which prohibits the erection of street names in any language other than English. All this does is to invite Sinn Féin to put them up illegally and to take the political credit for it. This type of legislation exists nowhere else in either Britain or Ireland and by its very nature is at odds with the spirit of the Agreement.

- Our particular concern at present relates to the new education reform proposals published last March by Dr. Mawhinney. The position given to Irish in the curriculum in these proposals is in stark contrast to the status accorded to the Welsh language in the Baker Bill presented at Westminster earlier this year. At the same time, we know that Dr. Mawhinney is not hostile to the language. He has, moreover, actively been trying to build cross-community bridges in Northern Ireland.

- The consultation period provided by the Department of Education closed on 10 June and we would be grateful for an

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opportunity to hear your reaction in the light of the submissions received. This is an area where we need to work closely together, in particular given the importance of Irish for the nationalist community but also to avoid handing another propaganda coup to Sinn Fein.

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STEERING NOTE

IRISH LANGUAGE

The Irish language is an important part of the nationalist identity; it falls within Article 5(a) of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in regard to respect for cultural heritage and identities. Sinn Fein have tried to hijack the language for their own purposes and we believe this can best be countered if the British will, through official action, recognise the importance of the language in the cultural heritage of both traditions in Northern Ireland.

The issue was discussed at the meetings of the Intergovernmental Conference on 10 January, 17 June and 6 October 1986 as well as at regular exchanges at official level, most recently 23 September 1987 and 26 January 1988.

The British attitude, while apparently forthcoming in principle, has been to place bureaucratic, legal and financial difficulties in the way of reform, and, in the final analysis, to argue that early action in many fields would be divisive.

A certain amount of progress has nonetheless been made, viz. in the following areas:

- The issue of a Central Secretariat circular to Government Departments in January of this year setting out guidelines for the recognition of Irish personal names in official business and for the answering of correspondence addressed to them in Irish
- The setting up of a research unit into Northern Irish placenames at Queen's University, Belfast
- The establishment of an Irish writer-in-residence scheme to be shared between Queen's and the University of Ulster at Coleraine
- The provision of additional monies (£25,000) to the Arts Council for funding of Irish language and cultural activities

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- The inclusion in the 1987 continuous household budget survey of a question regarding the use and knowledge of Irish (as a precursor to the inclusion of this in the 1991 census form)
- The promised publication of an ordnance survey map in Irish and a gazeteer showing both English and Irish versions of placenames.

However, despite strenuous efforts to date on our part, no progress has yet been registered on reforms in respect of recognition of the Irish version of placenames in official business; nor has there been any movement in regard to the repeal of the 1949 Streetnames Act. Other areas where deficiencies exist include inter alia the funding of Irish-speaking schools and adult education classes.

Furthermore, developments in recent months in respect of the Mawhinney proposals on educational reform are not encouraging for the future of Irish in Northern Ireland. The treatment of Irish in these proposals is difficult to accept in that Irish is accorded an even lower priority than music, art, drama, physical education or any modern foreign language and is thereby consigned to the lower, extra-curricular, end of school time, i. e., that 25%-30% that remains after the so-called "foundation" subjects will have been catered for.

The present proposals which downgrade the status of Irish have encountered strong opposition in many varied circles in Northern Ireland - e. g., Irish language organisations, the SDLP, the Catholic Church, etc. - since the publication of the proposals on 30 March last.

We are very concerned about the neglect of the Irish language and culture in these proposals, particularly by comparison with the proposals for the Welsh language in the Baker Plan.

MARCHING SEASON 1988

SPEAKING NOTE

First of all let me say that we recognise and appreciate the efforts of the RUC last year to police parades in an even-handed and effective way. Indeed the relative success of the RUC in this matter is seen by the SDLP and many Nationalists as marking one of the most visible achievements since the signing of the Agreement. I think you will agree that it is imperative that the good work done last year should be continued and built upon.

We both recognise that the security forces must do all in their power to protect people along marching routes and to maintain the peace. I think we are agreed also that a number of parades are deliberately intended to provoke. In that context, the essential standard for determining the route of a proposed parade, or the desirability of its taking place at all, should be the parade's acceptability or otherwise to a clear majority of the people living in the area or areas through which it passes. I know that you and Douglas Hurd before you have expressed a similar view.

We will be raising concerns in the Secretariat about a number of forthcoming parades. At this point I would like in particular to highlight two particular parades where we can see problems arising -

North Belfast: As you know, this is the most sensitive flashpoint for sectarian violence. Owing to population movements, part of the traditional marching route (Cliftonpark Avenue) is now largely nationalist while another part of the route (Duncairn Gardens) is loyalist on one side and nationalist on the other - and is a traditional sectarian flashpoint in North Belfast. Marches here have raised the sectarian temperature to fever pitch and resulted in serious violence, notably in September last year. I was therefore dismayed to note that a loyalist march was allowed to take this route two weeks ago and

that a further march may be permitted there today. You will have seen Bishop Cahal Daly's remarks about provocative and intimidatory Orange parades in his sermon at the funeral of William Totten who was killed in North Belfast last Sunday; and his call on the RUC to be more responsive to the need for protection of Catholics in the area. I would urge most strongly that no further marches be allowed along Duncairn Gardens/Cliftonpark Avenue.

Portadown: As you know, this is always a flashpoint. The decision by the RUC to prevent the march going through Obins Street (The Tunnel) was particularly welcome to nationalists and I assume that this year there will be no change in policy on this. However, the inclusion of Garvaghy Road - which is overwhelming nationalist - in the route for the march continues to be a problem. Readily available alternatives are there which should be used. Given the importance attached to the Portadown March throughout Northern Ireland, we are particularly concerned that every effort be made to avoid incidents.

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Anglo-Irish Division

16 June 1988