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S.H. 23.6.95.
John Hume
The Taoiseach



Byrne, (27)
Taoiseach in man files.
To keep - this 21/6/95
very much a summary
note.
Dun C. 19/6/95

MEETING WITH SDLP

An SDLP delegation led by Mr. John Hume met the Taoiseach and members of the Government for dinner at Government Buildings on Thursday 15 June. The attendance is listed in the Appendix to this note.

The meeting was regarded as a preliminary to the first formal bilateral meeting between both sides following the Taoiseach's letter of invitation to the Northern parties.

The discussion over dinner covered a range of topics. The main ones and the points made in relation to them are as follows:

Decommissioning

This topic took up quite an amount of time. The most important points to emerge from the discussion were

- (a) The SDLP were of the view that Sinn Fein would not agree to a decommissioning process at this time.
- (b) Seamus Mallon made the point that Sinn Fein were enjoying the situation which the British have placed themselves in and would seek to make the most out of it.
- (c) The unique nature of the decommissioning issue on this occasion was noted it was unlike previous situations in Irish history. The impasse could only be broken by movement on a number of fronts i.e. confidence building measures.
- (d) Mark Durkan suggested, that information sharing such as occurred with the ANC in South Africa might offer possibilities. The Dublin Government would have to act as guarantor in such a scenario.

- (e) John Hume made the point that at grassroots level there was a very strong pro-peace attitude - the problem was that Unionist politicians in particular were not being influenced by this groundswell of opinion among their supporters.

Unionist Position

The Taoiseach emphasised the urgent necessity to get the Unionists on board. There was a good deal of discussion as to how this might be done. The possibilities in the area of UUP - SDLP consultations were explored. If this proved productive it would put it up to Sinn Fein in no uncertain ways. John Hume made the point that the SDLP had had good meetings with the UUP on economic/social issues and the joint meeting with John Major had gone well. One of the problems was Molyneaux's style of operation. In the event of a leadership vote, the SDLP assessment was that Taylor would win it. Seamus Mallon made the point that unionism was dying and that the North Down bye-election result would confirm this. John Hume's assessment was that the UUP would not take up the Taoiseach's invitation to talks. It was also noted that the position of relatives of IRA victims should be remembered in the context of Unionist insistence on decommissioning before talks.

John Hume suggested the possibility of getting the Unionists in through the Forum - the current work of the Forum in relation to principles and realities, when concluded, could be a basis for an approach to them.

The Taoiseach emphasised the need to do everything possible to get the SDLP and the UUP to achieve common ground on political progress. He stressed that the Government were anxious to support the SDLP in this and any other measures which could help the situation.

It was agreed that there would be further meetings as required.

BRIAN MCCARTHY

Brian McCarthy
18 June, 1995.

WORKING DINNER WITH SDLP, THURSDAY, 15 JUNE, 1995

Mr. John Bruton, T.D., Taoiseach
Mr. Ruairi Quinn, T.D., Minister for Finance
Mrs. Nora Owen, T.D., Minister for Justice
Mr. Proinsias De Rossa, T.D., Minister for Social Welfare

Mr. John Hume, M.P., MEP
Mr. Seamus Mallon, M.P.
Mr. Joe Hendron, M.P.
Mr. Mark Durkan, (Chairman, S.D.L.P)
Mr. Sean Farren
Mr. Denis Haughey
Mrs. Brid Rogers

Mr. Sean O hUiginn, Second Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Sean Donlon, Special Adviser to the Taoiseach
Mr. Brian McCarthy, Assistant Secretary to the Government, Department of the Taoiseach
Mr. Simon Hare, Principal Officer, Department of the Taoiseach