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PSM: PSMIS: PSSG:  
Messrs. Murray, Teahon,  
Mansergh & Dalton:  
Ambassadors London &  
Washington: Joint Secretary:  
Counsellors A-I

Confidential

by Mr. Loughlin

Meeting with the Prime Minister  
Hillsborough, 9 April 1998

16

Not handed on to the  
Taoiseach - overruled by events  
15-4-98

1. The Taoiseach met the Prime Minister for a working breakfast at Hillsborough this morning.
2. He was accompanied by the Attorney General, Paddy Teahon, Dermot Gallagher, Tim Dalton, Martin Mansergh, Joe Lennon and the undersigned. The Prime Minister was accompanied by John Holmes, Alastair Campbell and Jonathan Powell.
3. The Prime Minister said he had spoken to Trimble earlier this morning. On para. 7, he had made clear to him the following points:
  - the work programme must list specific areas;
  - there must be a minimum number of bodies (Trimble was currently on five);
  - there must be specific language making clear that these bodies would happen.
4. Trimble had told him that, if he were asked whether there would definitely be implementation bodies, he would reply in the affirmative. He had also agreed to divide up his troops this morning and to send a team into Strand One negotiations. The Prime Minister had pressed him also to field a small team (himself and two others) for the Strand Two negotiations with us.
5. Teahon sketched out our requirements in terms of Westminster legislation. Furthermore, in the first paper we had given the UUP, we had underlined the need for an agreement in Strand One on how the transitional executive would work (in order to ensure the latter's input during the transitional period).
6. Teahon also pressed for a further element on the Irish language which would require public bodies to provide services to people wishing to conduct their business in Irish.
7. The Prime Minister hoped that it would be possible to tie down Strand Two quickly. He feared getting a whole series of fresh issues from Trimble when this was done. It could be that, in the light of the work done by officials last night, it would be possible

- to get trade-offs of various kinds.
8. Gallagher said it was crucial to have an initial piece of legislation at Westminster to establish a number of implementation bodies. It would be very helpful for the Taoiseach if the Prime Minister could also make clear that funding would be available for these bodies (to cover the first year) - in order to allow all the new institutions to come into existence at the same time. The Prime Minister indicated that he could say this, though not in legislation. Holmes remarked that it was, in a sense, a statement of the obvious.
  9. On decommissioning, the Prime Minister wanted to say that a process would get underway as soon as the agreement was completed. Unionists wanted the British Government to rule out Assembly office for members of parties linked to organisations which were not decommissioning. They were claiming that they would be seriously exposed if there was no undertaking that decommissioning would happen even after an agreement. Against this background, he wished to suggest something which would take account of their concerns but would not apply a sanction which could end up breaking the whole deal.
  10. Dalton said we had suggested a formulation involving decommissioning being achieved by a given date, which would also coincide with a release date for prisoners. The Prime Minister suggested that Sinn Féin might be able to live with a reference merely to a "process" getting underway. In a sense, this was already in existence (the Commission). He wanted a form of words which would not be a "show-stopper".
  11. On policing, the Prime Minister noted that the paper had been shortened. He wanted to include in it some recognition of the people in the RUC who had died. Dalton indicated that we could agree to this. It was a very difficult point, however, and Sinn Féin reacted very negatively when we had mentioned it to them. Mansergh said that, while pain and suffering could be acknowledged, a warm tribute to the RUC would not be sustainable for Sinn Féin.
  12. The Prime Minister observed that the position with the RUC was very similar to the question of the Metropolitan police force and black policemen up to about fifteen years ago. He said the Unionists had also sought language about the involvement of local communities with policing arrangements. Dalton indicated that this should be

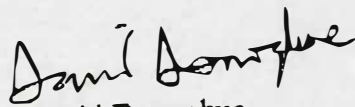
manageable.

- 13. The Taoiseach asked about a reference to "a new policing service". Dalton noted some new language in para 1 of the draft. The Prime Minister said he could refer broadly to a new approach, involving fundamental structural and cultural change (where the Metropolitan analogy was also relevant), but he could not promise "a new service". The Taoiseach hoped that we could devise language which would be as strong as possible.
- 14. On prisoners, the Prime Minister felt he had got Trimble to agree to the approach he envisaged (though the latter would attack it publicly). As for the public presentation, the Prime Minister would be "broad-shouldered", making clear that this was vital to ensure peace.
- 15. On equality, the Prime Minister was willing to look at stronger formulations for Sinn Féin's benefit. Teahon and Gallagher reiterated the importance of the public bodies suggestion in relation to the Irish language. The Prime Minister said that he might need to hold this over until the last minute.
- 16. He asked what could be done to ease Unionist fears about symbols and emblems. Donoghue noted the balanced and non-threatening terms of the current text. The Prime Minister wondered if some language could be devised to help deal with claims on the Unionist side about increased flying of the Tricolour. Noting nationalist objections to the flying of the Union Jack at police stations at e.g. West Belfast (unlike anywhere in Britain), Gallagher suggested that this could be dealt with through police regulations.
- 17. On security issues, the Prime Minister mentioned Unionist complaints about the Irish Government having an involvement in the firearms review. Dalton said that to delete this dimension would cause more problems (with Sinn Féin) than it was worth. Powell referred to complaints from Ken Maginnis about the Irish Government having a say in whether or not he could have a personal protection weapon.
- 18. Teahon suggested to the Prime Minister that he highlight gains for Unionists in the emerging package (such as their participation in the future IGC). The Prime Minister, agreeing with this approach, asked for a list of areas where the language had been improved from the Unionist point of view.

19. On constitutional matters, the Prime Minister said the UUP seemed to think that some further change might be offered to them by the Irish Government. Making clear that there was no basis for this view, the Taoiseach drew attention to the pressure the Government was coming under in relation to Articles 2 and 3, as illustrated in a half-page advertisement in today's Irish Times. Mansergh added that we had gone to the outer limits in this area. The Attorney General noted that UUP representatives whom he had met recently had indicated that, if all other issues were ok, this area would not be an insuperable obstacle. The Prime Minister hoped that he was right.
20. The Taoiseach and the Attorney General emphasised the extent of contact with the UUP's legal advisers in recent weeks. The Taoiseach had discussed the proposed constitutional amendments with Opposition leaders and his own party and there was no scope for even the tiniest change. The Prime Minister said he would make clear to Trimble that this was a matter for the two sovereign Governments and could not be negotiated further.
21. Returning to the Strand Two problem, the Taoiseach said that a compromise formulation had been agreed between the two Governments yesterday in order to meet Trimble's concerns. Last night, however, the UUP had set that aside and had sought in effect to reopen a negotiation on the position agreed by the two Governments in the Framework Document. Donaldson did not accept that the implementation bodies would have to be legislated for a Westminster and was trying to keep the base for these bodies in Assembly legislation and "as sandy as possible". The Taoiseach would be telling the UUP today that the implementation bodies would have to be provided for in Westminster legislation, though we could designate areas from a longer list. The fundamental difficulty, he continued, was that we did not trust the Unionists. The implementation bodies would not happen unless they were put into Westminster legislation. We had managed to bring about an end to IRA violence on the basis that there was another way. The implementation bodies had a key role to play in this respect.
22. The Prime Minister described this as a critical issue. He believed that Trimble was committed to implementation bodies. He recognised the Westminster legislation point as important but pointed to the protection available in the "mutually assured destruction" aspect. He advised against "rubbing Unionist faces too much" in the Westminster legislation point. It might be better simply to make clear that the two Governments would "make all necessary legislative preparations", i.e., a general

legislative commitment that bodies would be established. He referred again to Trimble's promise to answer a question on this in the affirmative. Donaldson's attitude, he suggested, involved a certain amount of posturing for internal advantage in the party.

23. The Taoiseach agreed that there was a lot of internal division in the UUP delegation. Trimble had tried his best to mislead his colleagues at certain points in the meeting last night (and the Taoiseach had endeavoured to be helpful to him in this respect).
24. On the wider issue, the Taoiseach emphasised the impossibility of going into a referendum campaign with a case for changing Articles 2 and 3 based on the "mutually assured destruction" argument.
25. The meeting concluded at this point and the Taoiseach and Prime Minister departed together, with their teams, for Castle Buildings.



David Donoghue

9 April 1998