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OIFIG AN AIRE GHNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
DUBLIN

7 Meán-Fomhair 1970

Rúnaí an Rialtais
Tithe an Rialtais



POS
5.28 PM

I am desired by Dr. P.J. Hillery, T.D., Minister for External Affairs, to transmit herewith a memorandum for the information of the Government entitled "Policy in relation to Northern Ireland" which the Minister wishes to have laid before the Government at its meeting tomorrow, 8th September, 1970.

John McColgan
Rúnaí Aire

Mr O Riordan,
an t-ádh timpall ag an
gCumann nua
POS 8/9/70.

clárúil, POS 8/9/70.

Cuirtear timpall, le
thoil, mar eolas
don chomhairle
ar maidin.
Eir.

7.9.70.

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Oifig an Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha

305/14/192 E

7 September 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

Policy in relation to Northern Ireland1. Long-term Policy

1. The Taoiseach's speech of 11th July and his remarks on the North in his speeches in Dáil Éireann on 28th and 30th July form a complete whole. In a sense the speech of 11th July is a new analysis of what the real Irish problem is and the Taoiseach's contributions in Dáil Éireann are a statement of how he envisages the beginnings of a solution to this problem.
2. Putting it very simply the analysis moves the problem away from a territorial dispute - as between 6 counties and the country as a whole - to an assertion that the dispute is between two major traditions. The majority tradition is found in strength throughout the whole country but the minority tradition, which begins from about 1600, is virtually confined to the area the focal point of which is Belfast. The Taoiseach did not attempt to describe the majority tradition but he does make the important point that the minority tradition is mainly due to a migration of people into the North East. As a migration this relatively new settlement in Ireland (relatively new in relation to earlier migrations) is entitled to retain its personality but it is right to require it to accept its true position in an Irish society rather than to allow it to impose its will on part of the country to the exclusion of the majority tradition.
3. The Taoiseach also makes the point that the minority tradition has become so intertwined with the majority tradition in Ireland that they are now inseparable from each other. The Unionist attempt, carried on for the past 50 years, to drive a wedge between the two main Irish traditions has resulted in the current bankruptcy, political, social and eventually economic, of the Northern State. The Taoiseach holds that this attempt to create a "British" monoculture in the North has failed and is doomed to failure. His view, therefore, is that the process should be reversed and that the whole Irish community, North and South, should realise the need to

I - 2

respect the best in all Irish traditions. Out of this a natural evolution will begin in the direction of finding a new Irish society acceptable to Irish people generally. In this process the division of Ireland will disappear.

4. History shows that Irish leadership has frequently come from people connected to the minority tradition; it is not unrealistic to suppose that something of the kind will happen again. Part of our policy should be to encourage this to happen both by showing **that** Ireland as a whole is receptive to the values of the minority tradition and that Unionist separatism, being impossible in practice, is not worthy of the talents and energies still employed in its defence.

5. The Taoiseach does, of course, emphasise that Britain has a responsibility for the creation of a separate Northern State and for its maintenance during the past 50 years. It is his view, however, that Britain no longer has an interest in maintaining the division of Ireland. At the same time it needs to be recognised that Britain cannot simply turn her back on the Northern State.

6. Major policy, therefore, should be directed to persuading Britain of the value of finding a different solution to the Irish question than the one which has now broken down; and to persuading the Northern majority that they have no real interests which cannot be protected within an Irish State.

7. This is what the Taoiseach speaks about chiefly in his interventions in Dáil Éireann on the 28th and 30th July.

8. In his remarks of 28th July the Taoiseach concentrates on the question of reforms in the North, pointing out their necessity, the progress made to date and the long road yet to be travelled.

9. In his statement of 30th July the Taoiseach takes up specific matters and deals with them in the following terms:

- (i) the Taoiseach recognises Chichester-Clark in his self-described capacity as an elected representative of a "closely-knit historic community". The implication of this, and a similar recognition of the Stormont Government, is that Chichester-Clark and his colleagues,

while they are authentic representatives of the Northern majority, are not entitled to receive territorial recognition in respect to the Six Counties; more than half the area of the Six Counties contains a non-Unionist majority and is held by the Stormont authority against the will of the majority of the people resident there;

- (ii) the Taoiseach enquires as to whether the Northern majority fear for their religious and civil liberties and suggests that the national majority would go a very long way in providing guarantees on this subject;
- (iii) if they fear for their economic well-being the Taoiseach replies that the country as a whole needs the economic vitality of the North and in its own interest would do everything necessary to leave the Northern economy at no risk. The Taoiseach makes the point that there is little value for Britain in continuing to finance the social bankruptcy of the North and hints that the money would be better spent in another way;
- (iv) if the Northern majority feel that some people have a spirit of revenge for the past the Taoiseach states that no Irish Government would countenance any such further crime against the Irish nation;
- (v) the Taoiseach offers Belfast a share of Irish sovereignty and a share of Irish pride in Irish achievements internationally and suggests that the cultural connection between the Northern majority and Britain could be accommodated in a new Ireland;
- (vi) the Taoiseach ends with the statement that an Ireland united by peaceful means has a greater democratic validity than an imperfect solution found 50 years ago for the wrong Irish question.

10. These statements by the Taoiseach, beginning with his analysis of the problem in his speech of 11th July and ending with his hints at solutions to particular problems in his Dáil speech of 30th July, form a consistent pattern and provide the basis for a progressive

I - 4

and active long-term policy in our dealings on the Northern question both with London and Belfast.

II Short-term Policy

However, policy in the short-term is affected by events outside Dublin's control. The most important such event which might be envisaged is a continued weakening of Major Chichester-Clark's Government leading to a possible takeover either by the right-wing or by London. An analysis of this subject must begin with the question of whether Chichester-Clark will survive the next meeting, perhaps later this month or early next month, of the Unionist Party Council. Technically he can ignore any resolutions they pass - as was done earlier this year - but, if votes go against him in terms of no-confidence, he may feel impelled to resign as Prime Minister. The chances of majority votes against him are, so far as one can judge at present, relatively strong.

2. If Chichester-Clark should decide to go there seem to be three major possibilities:

- (i) that he might be succeeded by Brian Faulkner or another member of the present Government who might hope to pull the Unionist Party together. It would seem that this could only be done if the new Prime Minister were prepared to make concessions to the right-wing;
- (ii) he might be succeeded by Mr. Craig; or
- (iii) the Governor, on British instructions, may decide not to seek an immediate replacement.

3. In either case (i) or (ii) it would seem that such a new Government would be unacceptable to the minority. In the latter case the right-wing takeover would be obvious and immediate; in the former case it would be less obvious but the ultimate result would tend to be the same.

4. The British reaction to prospect (i) may conceivably be to try to persuade us that the change would not necessarily reflect a return to traditional Unionism. (Chichester-Clark's departure might be attributed to ill-health so as to lend credence to such a view). On the whole such an interpretation should be resisted partly because it is necessary to take fully into account the reaction of the minority in the North which would almost certainly

be strenuously negative and also because such an interpretation could make us seem naive in the course of time if reforms become stultified.

5. Essentially, therefore, we should have the same reaction to both (i) and (ii) - that is to say neither formula is acceptable to us. If either should be proposed our attitude should be that Westminster must assume its responsibilities. This could take the form of not replacing Chichester-Clark, dismissing Stormont, either permanently or for a limited period of time, and ruling direct through the Governor in Council i.e. formula (iii).

6. From hints picked up at the British Embassy and in the North there is reason to believe that London may already have prepared the ground for formula (iii). Efforts are currently being made to discover more about this.

7. It has been our policy to discourage the minority from bringing down Stormont themselves. We have no similar reluctance, however, to seeing Stormont destroyed by the Unionist right-wing. If Craig, West, Paisley and their supporters have any illusions about returning to traditional Unionist domination, it would be better that such illusions should promptly be shattered by the British Government than that they should develop even a temporary credence.

8. Policy, it would seem, therefore, should be to demand an end, even if only temporarily, to Stormont autonomy if the right-wing should take over overtly or begin to do so by stealth.

9. This brings us to the question of what our policy should be if Britain assumed direct control over Northern Ireland affairs. This is a particularly delicate matter and in many respects it is difficult to offer a clear view until the strength of the various reactions has been gauged. Certainly a dismantling, in effect, of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 re-opens the whole constitutional question. It would seem in our interests to allow this to happen, if right-wing Unionism so wills, rather than to exert ourselves to prevent it from happening.

10. The tone of current exchanges between Dublin and London suggests that Britain would wish to find another solution if this can be done without hardship and suffering for the people in Northern Ireland.

II - 7

In the long-run Britain will not wish to continue to support Unionism as such in the North. Britain would prefer, it would seem, to obtain an Irish settlement which would be agreeable to moderate Unionist sentiment and this is what we should encourage.

11. If a British take-over should result in conflict between right-wing Unionism and the British Government our policy should be to continue to make conciliatory gestures to moderate Unionist opinion, to continue to assert our interest in the situation generally and in particular on behalf of the minority and to continue to insist that Anglo-Irish relations are more important than any giving-in by Britain to right-wing obduracy.

12. Chichester-Clark may soldier on, irrespective of what the Unionist Party Council does, until Stormont re-assembles and new legislation is debated. One would hope that he would do so as failure to pass reform legislation, if that should happen, would make it abundantly clear that the Unionist Party is incapable of just government. A British take-over in such circumstances would force Britain to change radically the governing structure in the North before limited autonomy could again be granted to Belfast so as to ensure that right-wing extremism would not again achieve a blocking position. Our policy in such circumstances should be to seek to press upon London the kind of structure which would leave the way open to a Dublin/Belfast rapprochement.

13. If the Unionist Party Council should vote marginally in favour of Chichester-Clark on whatever key issues should arise (we should not rule out the possibility that Craig may arrange this so as to avoid direct confrontation with Britain while continuing to consolidate his position and weakening the resolution of the present Government) we should be wary of regarding this as a "win" for Chichester-Clark. It might be no more than a respite.

14. The key problem remains - whether Stormont will legislate genuine reforms in matters such as local government and housing. The right-wing must break on these issues or accept a strangulation of its influence particularly West of the Bann. We must continue to exercise every pressure to obtain a clear confrontation on

II - 8

these issues and avoid any risk, such as a Faulkner cabinet might create, of allowing them to be obfuscated to the detriment of the minority position in the North and to our general policy in relation to the future of Ireland.