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CONFIDENTIALAonad Idir-Rannach um an Tuaisceart  
Inter-Departmental Unit on the North  
of IrelandMinutes of sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth  
meetings held on 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st August, 1971Present

Mr. S.G. Ronan, Chairman	Department of Foreign Affairs
Mr. D. Ó Súilleabháin	Department of the Taoiseach
Mr. J.F. MacInerney	Department of Finance
Mr. E. Gallagher	Department of Foreign Affairs
Mr. J. Small, Secretary	Department of Foreign Affairs

Purpose of meetings

The four special meetings held on successive days were convened on the instructions of the Government arising out of their deliberations on the Northern Ireland situation on the previous day. Mr. Ó Súilleabháin explained at the opening meeting that arising out of the Taoiseach's public invitation to the anti-unionist Stormont MPs to come to Dublin for discussions on the following week the Taoiseach had directed that a full assessment, including the extent of possible financial implications, <sup>be made</sup> of all proposals and suggestions likely to be made by the Northern MPs. Such an assessment should, inter alia, cover the propriety and feasibility of the various measures likely to be proposed as well as their likely effects on Anglo-Irish relations. It would be for the Unit to anticipate and list the various options likely to be proposed with an indication of possible better alternatives. The Government would also want to know whether it would be proper or prudent for the Government to offer financial support for any or some of the various courses of action likely to be proposed. In other words, the Government would want to know in advance the situations where financial support might be given and the approximate amount of that support.

These matters were considered by the Unit at the four special meetings and seven papers were prepared for the Taoiseach and the Ministers who were to accompany him at the meeting, fixed for 23rd August, with the elected leaders of the Northern Ireland Opposition.



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The texts of the seven papers are annexed to these minutes and bear the following titles:

- (1) General Note for the information of the Taoiseach, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Finance only (Annex I)
- (2) Suggested agenda for meeting of 23rd August with the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group (Annex II)
- (3) Objective to be agreed at meeting (Annex III)
- (4) Method of achieving objective to be agreed (Annex IV)
- (5) Financial provisions and other business (Annex V)
- (6) General Note on financial provisions for the information of the Taoiseach, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Finance only (Annex VI)
- (7) Draft press release for use after the meeting of 23rd August (Annex VII)

#### North/South cooperation

(a) Joint Action on Fishery Projects: The Chairman circulated a letter to the Unit dated 17th August from the Fisheries Division of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries seeking guidance on future North/South contact and cooperation in fishery matters in the light of the post-internment situation in Northern Ireland. In particular the Fisheries Division was anxious to have the advice of the Unit on the significance to be attached to the passage in Mr. Brian Faulkner's intemperate statement of 13th August reading:

"What is apparent is that no further attempt by us to deal constructively with the present Dublin Government is possible".

In view of the fact that the Foyle Fisheries Commission was constituted by statutes <sup>of the</sup> ~~passed~~ in Dublin and Belfast <sup>parliament</sup> ~~and that~~ ~~serious difficulties would inevitably arise from disengagement~~ the Unit had no hesitation in recommending a continuation of normal contacts on this matter which are at official level.

(b) Northern Ireland Road Safety Council: The Chairman informed the Unit that on 18th August he was advised by the Secretary of the Department of Local Government of an invitation extended to an

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official of his Department to attend a meeting of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Council on 17th September as an observer. *a* Foras Forbartha official was to read a technical paper at the meeting and his name, as well as the subject of his paper, had already appeared on the printed programme. The Chairman explained that the Northern Ireland Road Safety Council was under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Belfast and the meeting was to be addressed by Mr. John Taylor, Minister of State in that Ministry. The last such meeting was addressed by Mr. Faulkner who made a political speech attacking the IRA. The Department of Foreign Affairs had advised against the participation of the two officials from the South because of the involvement of John Taylor in the meeting and the uncertainty about the contents of his speech. The Unit agreed with this advice.

Circulated to

The Taoiseach

Minister for Foreign Affairs

and Members of the Unit.



SECRETANNEX 1

For information of Taoiseach, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Finance only

The Inter-Departmental Unit on the North has been meeting daily to consider the evolving situation and in particular to examine the question of cooperation between the Government and the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group as well as the matter of financial commitment. For this study the representation at the Unit has been confined as follows to:-

Mr. S.G. Ronan, Chairman	Department of Foreign Affairs
Mr. D. Ó Súilleabháin	Department of the Taoiseach
Mr. J.F. MacInerney	Department of Finance
Mr. E. Gallagher	Department of Foreign Affairs
Mr. J. Small, Secretary	" " " "

The Unit submit the attached papers for consideration. The papers include a draft agenda for the meeting arranged for Monday 23rd August together with suggestions in regard to each item on the agenda. These documents are being circulated to all members of the Government likely to be present at the meeting. It is proposed to circulate only the draft agenda itself to members of the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group.

There is attached herewith, again only for the information of the Taoiseach, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Finance, a more detailed note on the item - Financial Provisions - than is being circulated to the other Ministers. The reason for this procedure is due to the Unit's considered view that discussion of the financial provisions should be limited to two representatives of the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group and such members of the Government as the Taoiseach nominates together with, if desired, the minimum administrative assistance in that confined discussion.

The Unit recommend for consideration by the Taoiseach and Ministers the question of advising Mr. Liam Cosgrave T.D. and Mr. Brendan Corish T.D. of the general intention behind the meeting with the Northern Group in order, if possible, to obtain statements of approval from them of the Government's intentions. Whether this should be done in advance of the meeting or immediately thereafter and before a press release is issued is also a matter for consideration.

The Unit have discussed very generally the question of the possibility of retaliatory measures by the British Government in response to the decisions that might be taken at the discussion. It is their present view that the likelihood of retaliation is reasonably remote so far as London is concerned. There are international factors in Anglo-Irish relations which did not exist in the 1930s e.g. common membership of GATT, OECD, the UN as well as the common applications for membership of the European Communities all of which Britain would not easily wish to disturb. The only important area in which retaliation might occur, according to the preliminary study made, is in that of support payments and other bilateral agreements or understandings which need to be renewed at frequent regular intervals. So as to obviate even this possibility the Unit consider that any official expressions, by way of press release or otherwise, following the discussion should be very carefully worded so as to give the least excuse for offence while creating the maximum interest in the proposals that might emerge; for example, words encouraging "civil disobedience" should be avoided.

The Unit consider that the most likely area of retaliation will be in matters concerning North/South cooperation exclusively. Such retaliations are likely to be nothing more than pinpricks as the question of balance of advantage would arise and this would not necessarily be in favour of the North.

ANNEX II

Agenda for meeting between Taoiseach, accompanied by Government Ministers, and Members of the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group, 23rd August, 1971

Item I

Objective to be agreed.

Item II

Method of achieving objective to be agreed.

Item III

Financial provisions and other business.

Item IV

Press Release to be agreed.

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Item I - objective to be agreed

The following wording is suggested:

to obtain equality of treatment for everyone in Northern Ireland irrespective of political views or religion and without prejudice to the aspiration of the great majority of Irish people to the reunification of Ireland.

The above follows the wording of the Downing Street Declaration. This wording was also followed in Mr. Heath's telegram to the Taoiseach on 19th August. It is not possible, therefore, for the British Government to object to our adopting their own policy.

The wording of the second part of the objective is something for which we do not have to apologise to anyone.

Various other expressions could be used instead but the view agreed by the Inter-Departmental Unit is that we should avoid any phraseology such as, for example, "support of a policy of passive resistance" (even though that is the obvious intention) as such phraseology could be found objectionable not only by the British Government but by other Governments as well. The Unit consider that there is no need to risk any difficulty on this score.

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ANNEX IVItem II - method of achieving objective to be agreed

The following formula is recommended:

This objective is to be pursued by  
non-violent political means.

The Unit agreed to recommend this formula. It is not objectionable in principle and is completely in line with the Government's general policy. It is also completely in line with the general policy of the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group. It specifically eliminates violence and, by doing so indicates that groups committed to violent activity will not form any part of the organisation of the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group.

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Item III - Financial Provisions and Other Business

(Financial Provisions to be discussed in ante-room).

The Unit recommend that this item be discussed in a restricted meeting between two nominees of the Northern Group and such Ministers as the Taoiseach nominates for that purpose. For convenience it is suggested that the nominated persons should withdraw from the general meeting to discuss Item III in detail and should later report to the general meeting on their conclusions.

(Other Business to be discussed simultaneously at main conference).

This leaves room for the Northern delegates to raise any matters they wish. The Inter-Departmental Unit have in mind however that the Taoiseach may wish to ask them for full cooperation in such matters as providing us with evidence in brutality cases including cases of actual killings. We may wish to process such evidence with a view to activity at Strasbourg or elsewhere.

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SECRETItem III - Financial Provisions

It is suggested by the Unit that a fund be created "to provide relief and assistance for the victims of deprivation /community deprived/ of civil and human rights in Northern Ireland". This is not a unanimous recommendation as will be explained below.

Mr. MacInerney informed the Unit as follows:

- (i) financial procedures require that payments from public funds should have prior Dail approval; otherwise the Accounting Officer should receive a direction from his Minister a copy of which should be sent to the Comptroller and Auditor General;
- (ii) in his opinion the concurrence of the Opposition parties should be sought. (This view is shared by the other members of the Unit);
- (iii) grants-in-aid are not payable to persons outside the jurisdiction and, therefore, outside the control of the State. For this reason he suggested the appointment of trustees to receive payments from the Exchequer and make transfers to the Northern group on cause shown and for purposes indicated. This is necessary also to ensure that the State is able to demonstrate that, so far as can be provided, the fund will not be used for any purpose other than that clearly intended;
- (iv) auditors should be appointed.

Mr. Ó Súilleabháin, generally supported by Mr. Ronan and Mr. Gallagher, suggested that the procedure be kept as simple as possible. It was pointed out that the likely treasurers for the fund, Mr. John Hume M.P. and Mr. Roderick O'Connor M.P. are both Irish citizens and that the requirement about trusteeship within the jurisdiction could well be waived in those particular circumstances. Furthermore it could be insisted that the fund be established in Dublin and, no doubt, the treasurers would agree to this. It was also suggested that the fund should be open to public subscription and that the Taoiseach should consider publicly supporting an appeal for subscriptions to the fund from the public. Consequently insistence on auditing the entire fund, in which the Government's possible contributions would be unidentifiable, would impose an unnecessary burden. In any case it would be assumed that the treasurers would arrange for audit and that an auditor's certificate would be available.

Mr. MacInerney included a strong reservation about the formula set out above in relation to the nature of the fund. He considered that the items listed among the possible financial demands by the Group - particularly Items A, B and D - would not clearly fall within the terms of the above definition of the purposes of the suggested fund. He said that the description of the purpose of the fund should include words such as "to assist the promotion of the agreed objective".

Mr. Ó Súilleabháin felt that such expenses would be legitimate in any fund of that kind. He said that, for example, if Stormont M.P.s gave up their Stormont salaries and allowances and worked to promote the purposes of the fund, they would be entitled to suitable remuneration. He instanced as a suitable precedent CXFAM which has paid organisers, carries out propaganda work, including advertising, and obviously had considerable general expenses.



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Mr. Gallagher argued strongly for a description of the fund to which the British Government could not successfully object in an international forum or otherwise. The description is roughly in line with the aims of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa (Vote 46 C8). The description of that fund runs "the fund provides relief and assistance for the victims of the policy of apartheid". Mr. Gallagher argued that it is open to any Government to provide relief and assistance for the victims of deprivation of civil and human rights anywhere and the British Government could not, therefore, easily protest about our doing so in relation to Northern Ireland. He observed that, in such matters, debate usually ends up on the subject of the actual wording used rather than on the real intent that might lie behind the Government's contributions. He regarded it as necessary to maintain the strongest obtainable position in relation to the fund against potential future complaints or pressures. For these reasons Mr. Gallagher considered that the insert suggested by Mr. MacInerney - "to assist the promotion of the agreed objective" - would be inappropriate.

Mr. Gallagher also referred to the possible reactions of the British Labour Party. They are being weaned away from the bipartisan policy but might be forced back to it if anything done here, even in terms of the description of the fund, could readily be made to appear to be an improper intervention.

The Unit decided that all the above views should be placed before Ministers. The majority of the Unit are in favour of the description of the fund set out at the head of this note. Mr. MacInerney reserved his position on that description.

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QUANTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE FINANCIAL DEMANDS BY THE GROUPA. Elected Representatives

11 M.P.s @ £2,500 per annum - i.e. total	£2,300 per month		
6 Senators @ £600 per annum - i.e. total	600	"	"

B. Members of Public Bodies

1 fulltime Chairman @ £5,000 p.a. - i.e. total	420	"	"
60 part-time members @ £600 p.a. - i.e. total	3,000	"	"

C. <u>Aid for internees' dependants:</u> approx.	5,000	"	"
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D. General Expenses

Travelling, office expenses, hall hire etc. approx.	3,680	"	"
	<u>£15,000</u>	"	"



Item IV - Press Release

23rd August, 1971.

The following draft press release is submitted.

The following statement has been issued today by the Government Information Bureau on behalf of the Taoiseach:

The Taoiseach received this afternoon the representatives of the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group whom he had invited to meet him to discuss the present situation in Northern Ireland. The deputation consisted of

The Taoiseach was accompanied at the meeting by

It was agreed that all should work towards the objective of obtaining equality of treatment for everyone in Northern Ireland irrespective of political views or religion and without prejudice to the aspiration of the great majority of Irish people to the unification of Ireland.

It was also agreed that this objective should be pursued by non-violent political means.

The Northern Group informed the Taoiseach and the Ministers present of their intention to establish in Dublin, in the light of the objective and means set out above, a fund to provide relief and assistance for (the community deprived (the victims of deprivation) of civil and human rights in Northern Ireland. The treasurers of the fund will be Mr. John Hume M.P. and Mr. Roderick O'Connor M.P. The fund will be open to public subscription and further details of this will be announced as soon as possible.

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The Taoiseach and the Ministers present join with the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group in their appeal to the public to contribute generously to this fund now and on a continuing basis until its purposes have been achieved.

The Taoiseach informed the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group that, subject to the approval of the Government and in anticipation of early approval by Dáil Éireann, a regular contribution would be made from the Exchequer to the fund.

The Taoiseach also indicated that the Government acknowledge the role of the Stormont Parliamentary Opposition Group as the principal representative body of the non-unionist community.

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