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Title:	Copy letter by Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain D O'Sullivan to Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs HJ McCann, reporting a meeting with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw, mainly regarding the recent visit of Prime Minister Edward Heath to Northern Ireland, and the ongoing inter-party negotiations there.
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Personal and Confidential

31st August 1973

Dear Secretary

I had most of an hour with Mr Whitelaw today. He was accompanied by Mr Woodfield, Deputy Head of the Northern Ireland Office and by a Private Secretary.

I told the Secretary of State that I was anxious to get his overall impressions on the Northern Ireland situation following the Prime Minister's visit and his view on the timetable for future developments.

Mr Whitelaw said that the main purpose of the Prime Minister's visit to the North was to "create an attitude of urgency about reaching practical solutions". The Secretary of State had been trying himself to push in this direction but he came to the conclusion that he needed his views reinforced at the highest level.

The Prime Minister's visit had two good effects:-

- (1) it put beyond any doubt that, if the North wants to have responsibility for the running of its own affairs, this can only be on the basis of the present Constitution;
- (2) it enabled the Prime Minister to get from Messrs Fitt, Faulkner and Napier the most firm reassurances of their readiness to make the Constitution work and their acknowledgement that the Executive can realistically only come from their parties.

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Paisley made no secret of his determination to wreck the Constitution. Craig can be counted on to pursue the same objective. The gap between Faulkner's group and the unpledged Unionists has widened considerably and the unpledged Unionists are a considerable source of worry to him. There will certainly be some defections from Faulkner's party and this is a point which the SDLP should bear in mind in pressing their demands. The SDLP should bear in mind too that the Constitution means the end of Protestant domination in the North and this is something which even moderate Protestants find hard to take.

The Prime Minister was struck by the fact that in his talks with the SDLP and the Alliance Party no objection was voiced against Faulkner as a possible leader of the Executive. The Secretary of State expressed the personal view that Faulkner is now almost certain to get the job and he implied that London would be glad of this.

On the reorganisation of the police the Prime Minister formed the impression that a solution of this problem may prove less difficult than appeared earlier. There is hope that the SDLP will be prepared to accept a reorganisation based on the RUC. In no circumstances would the SDLP regard Mr Flanagan as an acceptable Head of the RUC. He would be fully acceptable to Mr Faulkner. The SDLP want the new Head to be brought in from outside. This, according to Mr Whitelaw should not present a great problem. The police authority will be making a recommendation in about a month or so. Chief Superintendent Lagan

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is not an applicant for the post and even if he were he is not eligible because of his present seniority. The SDLP in their talks with Mr Whitelaw on police reform always bring up the question of the unsuitability of certain senior unnamed officers of the force. They refuse to disclose who these are. If they could be persuaded to do so, then it might be possible "to do something about" the individuals in question.

In brief, the Prime Minister and Mr Whitelaw are hopeful that agreement on police reorganisation can be found. The reorganisation will, however, have to be on the basis of the present RUC. A reorganised RUC will be readily accepted in Belfast. It will not be accepted in the Creggan. No police force would be accepted there. The Creggan has always been a limbo where police influence is concerned.

Mr Whitelaw is hopeful too that the Council of Ireland will not present a serious problem. Mr Faulkner entered no significant stipulation on this in his talk with the Prime Minister.

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Mr Whitelaw will be meeting the different parties next week in an effort to get the moderates to begin to talk. I expressed our very strong reservations about a piece-meal approach. Our views on this I said are entirely in line with those of the SDLP. When the SDLP were in Dublin last week they expressed concern at the impression they seemed to have gained in Belfast that the piece-meal approach might be agreeable to us. They were assured of our very strong feelings in favour of a package arrangement. Mr Whitelaw could take it the SDLP are adamant on this and we are fully behind them.

The Secretary of State said that while his mind is not fully closed on the subject he would see merit in having the Executive first. However, this is a matter he would think about again. He then urged that the official talks on the Council of Ireland should get under way without delay. It is essential that Dublin and London should reach as full a measure of agreement as possible on the Council before the Conference takes place. The matter should be treated as urgent in case the Conference may be held earlier than at present contemplated. ^{NP} [I put to Mr Whitelaw the point you mentioned on the phone this morning about the Minister's conversation on the 16th August with Ambassador Galsworthy and about the Ambassador's earlier conversation with the Taoiseach. Mr Whitelaw asked his Secretary to take a detailed note of these points. In reply the Secretary of State confined himself to three comments. On the question of the Civil Service he said he may be able to produce some helpful proposals fairly soon. About Compound S this is

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receiving the closest attention. He wants to let these people out but there are conflicting reports about a few of them which are being further investigated. As regards the question of a change in the manner in which the Army carry out their duties, the problem is not a general one. It is limited to a small number of units and these are receiving special attention.

Mr Whitelaw referred briefly to the extradition problem. He said it is unfortunate that the traffic is all one way. I explained to him that the matter is one for the Courts and not for the Government. He then told me that he is very concerned about a man named [REDACTED] who apparently comes from Lurgan and is a prime mover in cross-Border incidents from the Monaghan area. If we could do anything to help apprehend [REDACTED] Mr Whitelaw would be most grateful.

The Secretary of State also referred to the recent correspondence between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach on the Strasbourg case. He said he very much regretted the attitude we had taken on this but he fully understood the problems on our side. I repeated that there had been a strong reaction from the minority in the North when we agreed to postponement of the case. I told the Secretary of State that given the shock which public opinion in Ireland had received from the Littlejohn case any effort by us to hush up the Strasbourg case would undoubtedly give rise to a very strong public reaction. Mr Whitelaw said the timing of Strasbourg is unfortunate but he did not see that it need necessarily damage relations between Dublin and London.

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On the question of the bombing incidents here, Mr Whitelaw said that there is still no proof that the Provisional IRA is responsible. He thinks it highly unlikely that the Provisional IRA ^{in Belfast} are involved as their striking power has by now been so seriously reduced. He doubts too whether the Dublin Provisionals are responsible. If there is an IRA involvement it is probably confined to some splinter group with Derry connections.

Finally, the Secretary of State expressed his warm appreciation on our cooperation on the Border and particularly of our help in connection with the Pettigo incident of a few days ago.

Yours sincerely

DONAL O'SULLIVAN

Ambassador

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Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs