

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Reference Code: 2005/151/697

Title: Confidential message form from Department of Foreign Affairs containing message from Sean Donlon, Assistant Secretary, to Donal O'Sullivan, Irish Ambassador to the United Kingdom to instruct him that urgent representations be made to Merlyn Rees, MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on the conduct of the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention

Creation Date(s): 20 May 1975

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CONFIDENTIAL

MESSAGE FORM

TELEX TELEX TELEX

(Please put a cross or tick in box as appropriate)

For use by Comm. Cen.
No. C220

Security Classification:

Transmit as:

Precedence

Secret)

Confidential)

Restricted)

Unclassified)

Code Two copies

Clear One copy

Immediate

Urgent

(To be used only when essential)

Does this message refer to an encoded message Yes No

Date: 20 May 1975

Drafted and released by: Donlon

Ext. 166

File Ref:

Released by: "

Ext. "

TO (Receiving Office) Embassy, London

FROM (Originating Office) HQ

FOR (Receiving Officer) Ambassador

FROM (Originating Officer) Donlon

REF YOUR/MY _____

SUBJECT _____

Minister has directed that urgent representations be made to Rees on the question of the conduct of the Convention and in particular on the issue of how the Convention's report is submitted to the British Government. In reply to questions from the Minister when they met on 15 May, Rees said that the report would be a collective one written by Lowry and this seems to us to be a reasonable interpretation of the Northern Ireland Act 1974. However, the UUUC majority on the Convention Rules Committee of which Paisley is chairman has pushed through draft rules of procedure which effectively deprive Lowry of any power and ensure that the UUUC can arrange the business of the Convention and presentation of its report as they see fit. It is expected that they will use their majority in the Convention to ensure that these rules are adopted. In view Rees' information to the Minister last week, you should inquire what action he now proposes to take to ensure that his expectations and the spirit of the 1974 Act are complied with.

For your own information, SDLP feel that Lowry is not responding strongly enough to the erosion of his position and they feel that unless he can be firmed up somewhat they will have no alternative but to initiate a High Court action. The danger in this is that it could precipitate the collapse of the Convention very quickly and in a very bad atmosphere.