

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2007/111/1867
Creation Date(s):	10-12 November 1976
Extent and medium:	7 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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AMEASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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CONFIDENTIAL

12 November 1976

Dear Assistant Secretary

I am enclosing for your information a note by Mr O'Brien on a recent conversation with Alan Goulty, Second Secretary at the FCO. The note contains a number of points which will be of interest to the Department.

Yours sincerely

John Campbell

John H.F. Campbell
Minister Plenipotentiary

Mr Sean Donlon
Assistant Secretary
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Dublin 2

1. ~~Mr. J. J. Lee~~
2. Miss Kavanagh
PA please.

cc. PSM

PSS

Mr. Swift

Mr. O. L. Higgins

Mr. Burke

W

- 15/11/76

1. Mr. Campbell
2. Ambassador

You will wish to be aware that I had lunch yesterday with Mr. Alan Gaulty, Republic of Ireland Department at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The following summary of his comments may be of interest to the Department.

He raised Dublin's attitude towards the SDLP and defined it in terms of a special, if not exclusive, relationship and particularly vis-a-vis the "other parties of moderation" in Northern Ireland. The core of his comments, which he said were made on a personal basis, centred on the argument that the nature of the special relationship between the Government and the SDLP on the one hand reduced its role and influence with other parties within Northern Ireland while on the other hand increasing its protective attitude towards the SDLP by seeking to enhance their political standing and maintaining their unity. If there were significant strains and tensions within the SDLP at present, and whatever their cause, he wondered whether or not it might be preferable to allow the SDLP to fragment and thus create a situation in which the moderates might be able to more clearly define their position and seek a more accommodating response from not only parties such as Alliance but the moderates within the UUUC. In his view, an aspect to the present difficult situation was that while on the majority community side one had a number of view points represented by a number of parties on the minority side one had at least the feeling of two viewpoints being represented by only one party anxious to maintain its unity at any price.

He mentioned the recent P Q which was the subject of communication between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister. He understood from subsequent events that the Ambassador had been in contact with Willy Whitelaw about the Conservative Party's attitude to the Question. In a recent conversation with Airey Neave Gaulty learned that Willy Whitelaw had immediately contacted Neave and he suspected that part of Neave's angry reaction to the

suspicion that the text of the P Q had been made available to us in advance was because the approach had been to Whitelaw rather than to himself.

Goulty said that the Whitelaw incident and the Ministers remarks to Mason at their last meeting seemed to indicate a feeling on our part that Whitelaw would be more amenable to approaches from us on Northern Ireland than Neave - this was something which Goulty himself gravely doubted. I got the impression that Goulty knows Neave fairly well and lunches with him from time to time. Neave also phones him fairly regularly at the Foreign Office on Northern Ireland affairs and Goulty mentioned that whenever he does phone Neave introduces himself as "Neave from Mrs. Thatcher's Office" rather than "Neave Shadow Spokesman on Northern Ireland". Goulty thought it important to avoid giving Neave the impression that he was being bypassed and particularly that approaches would be made to Whitelaw on the basis that we found him more sympathetic, particularly in view of the fact that Whitelaw, although fully supporting Mrs. Thatcher, had been her strongest rival in the final phase of the leadership contest. Because of Neave's closeness to Mrs. Thatcher it would be unfortunate that any such feeling, if it exists, should reach her.

Goulty doubted very much that Whitelaw continued to maintain a detailed interest in Northern Ireland and he got the impression from Neave that Northern Ireland was not discussed in any detail or indeed at any length at Shadow Cabinet meetings. (This is something which confirms an impression I received from Michael Heseltine at a dinner party sometime ago). When Northern Ireland is discussed it is Goulty's impression that Whitelaw says very little.

Goulty did on the other hand say that Edward Heath appeared to maintain a very strong interest in Northern Ireland and while he was obviously not in a position to influence current Conservative thinking at Shadow Cabinet level, he was an important person to keep in mind since on current expectations he would be the next Foreign Secretary.

(Goulty told me that Neave's son had planned to visit

Dublin sometime ago but that the visit had been cancelled at the last moment on what he understood were health grounds - I was left with a certain doubt that this was not the whole story).

Goulty had little to say about the Whale article on withdrawal in the Sunday Times. His only observation was that if the British Government decided to withdraw he doubted very much, given present economic circumstances, that the type of negotiated withdrawal involving financial assistance to the area over a specified period as envisaged by those who speculate on the issue, would be realised.

With regard to the Quigley Report Goulty told me that he had been asked to submit observations on the report within the Foreign Office. While he was surprised that the report had been published by the Government he regarded it as a good basis for discussion and wider consultation within Northern Ireland. He strongly doubted whether the substantial funds required to finance many of the recommendations of the report would be forthcoming from the Treasury. He thought it therefore important that a debate take place within Northern Ireland based on the report but largely seeking ways of achieving its objectives through "self help". In his own report he suggested that the economy of Northern Ireland should be seen in the context of the development of the economy of the whole of Ireland. He recognised that there were practical difficulties in achieving this, even in a limited way, since it would for example be difficult to extend the same tax free holiday on export profits to firms in Northern Ireland as at present operated in the Republic as most of the exports are directed to mainland Britain. He wondered however if in the Community context there was not a good case for considering the country as a single agricultural unit where the interests of Northern Ireland were identical with the interests of the Republic but were not always identical with the interests of the U.K. as a whole. It might be possible for example to have the Green Pound set as an exchange rate for the whole of the Island. Insofar as Northern Ireland's case had to be presented at Brussels it could always be done

by a Minister from the Northern Ireland Office.

He had noted remarks made to an Irish Independent correspondent which indicated that the Minister had compared, after the recent fisheries negotiations, what had been achieved by himself for Irish fishermen and the limited achievement of the Foreign Secretary for fishermen in Northern Ireland. Apart from speculating about the validity of the point, as he thought that the conditions for fishermen North or South of the border would be the same, he considered that the occasion could have been an opportunity for us to have sought to enhance the position of Northern Ireland's interest as we did ("presumably with the SDLP in mind") in the context of elections to the European Parliament.

He recalled that sometime ago Mr. Michael O'Kennedy T.D. had made some suggestions about North/South cooperation and particularly with regard to increasing the volume of cross border trade. He wondered to what extent O'Kennedy's statement, which he considered as concrete and practical, might be pursued by the Government.

Goulty referred to the Cahill compensation case and the decision of the Court of Appeal. He thought it very likely that Cahill would take the matter on appeal to a higher court as it appeared *prima facie* that Lord Justice Gibson had based his judgement on the "intention of Parliament" in passing the compensation legislation. One of the fundamental rules regarding the Interpretation of Statutes by the Courts is that the Judge should look to the words and statements of the Act and not to the intention of the discussions in Parliament when passing the legislation.

I mentioned the case of John Joseph Canavan (my report of 9 June refers) who was sentenced on Monday, 8th November, to ten years imprisonment by Mr. Justice Melford Stephenson at the Old Bailey. I mentioned to Goulty that in the course of my visit to Canavan he had been particularly anxious that the information he had made available to the police on IRA activities should not be mentioned at his trial. However, Melford Stephenson when

delivering the sentence had stated that the relatively lenient ten years was due to the fact that Canavan had given the police of "wealth of detail" about others involved. In the course of the trial it emerged that Canavan, as he admitted to me at Brixton, was a member of Sinn Fein and the PIRA. It also emerged, and he did not mention this to me, that he had been sent to Ireland twice on training courses and was instructed on how to make incendiary bombs, time bombs, land mines and booby traps and how to use rifles, machine guns and other weapons.

Goulty referred briefly to the Murray's case and to the number of letters which had been received requesting the Foreign Office to intervene with the Government to commute the sentences. He also said that in many of the letters received at the Foreign Office there were very firm demands that if an approach were made to an executioner here he should be refused exit from Britain for that purpose.

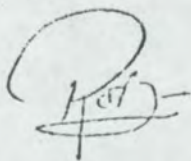
I understand that there is some concern at the F.C.O. about the credentials for Ambassador-Designate Haydon. Goulty said that Haydon was very anxious to present his credentials as soon as possible but that there was some difficulty about a suitable formula because of the need to refer to the Presidential Commission. Goulty wondered if a formula could not be found but added that this was a matter being dealt with at a much higher level.

The Foreign Office have instructed their Embassy in Dublin to invite a group of TDs on an official visit to Westminster and the invitations should issue within the next couple of days. The visit will take precisely the same format as that for the group of six TDs who came in May, 1975. The same number I understand are being invited on this occasion.

In the context of the few comments about the British Presidency of the Community Goulty remarked on what he understood was the "strained relationship" between the Foreign Secretary and Sir Michael Palliser. The strain in the relationship has emerged partly because of the

review of the functions and working of the Foreign Office which is being undertaken by the Central Policy Review Staff (based at Downing Street) and the internal Foreign Office assessment of its role and function. The Foreign Secretary is apparently showing indifference towards the Foreign Office case and some press references on the review, particularly in the Guardian, have been inspired by Sir Michael Palliser. In a conversation sometime ago with Mr. Michael Finn, Information Officer at the Civil Service Department, I understood that an article published on this subject around the beginning of September in the Guardian by Mark Arnold Foster was strongly inspired by Palliser who knows Arnold Foster personally arising out of their close contacts in the Brussels context.

Goulty also referred to the annoyance being felt by many of his colleagues at the decision which Palliser is "imposing on the Foreign Office" regarding the use of French during the British Presidency. There is resentment at what many view as an unwarranted break with the tradition of Palmerston who established the practice at the Foreign Office of transacting all business and communications in English. The refusal of the Permanent Secretary to entertain the objections of some of his colleagues is casting him in the role of a not very benevolent autocrat.



Richard A. O'Brien

10 November. 1976