

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

17 Grosvenor Place  
London SW1X 7HR

Confidential

6 August 1979

Dear David

I am enclosing for the record a note of telephone conversations which I had over last weekend with Governor Carey when he was in London. As the note records I was in touch with the Minister on the matter and also with Mr Siev.

In view of the subject matter I have not sent a copy direct to Washington but you may wish to do so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'John H.F. Campbell', is written above the typed name.

John H.F. Campbell  
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Mr David Neligan  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
Dublin 2

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NOTE

In response to a phone call from one of the Governor's aides, I phoned Governor Carey of New York on Friday morning, 3rd August. The Governor was in London and had seen the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland the previous day.

The Governor asked me to get a message to the Minister to say that he would be grateful if the Minister could phone him that afternoon. He said that he had had a very useful conversation with Atkins the previous day. Atkins had told him that if the Minister were agreeable and if he (Atkins) had Cabinet clearance he would be ready to meet with the Minister and with Messrs Carey, O'Neill, Kennedy and Moynihan on some suitable occasion for private discussions. Though Carey did not say so explicitly the proposal for the meeting was evidently to be taken as his initiative.

Atkins, according to the Governor, seemed interested in the opportunity such a meeting could afford him to explain his thinking on Northern Ireland policy on which, he said, he is acting in consultation with the Minister. The Conservative Government would be in office for five years and he was determined to see real progress during this term. He was still relatively new in the job but he was resolved to talk resolutely with all the parties to try to convince them of the need for political progress. Carey said that Atkins had been particularly emphatic about the present dangers presented by terrorism, notably IRA terrorism. He had singled out Gerry Adams as a particularly dangerous figure.

Carey said that Atkins was evidently concerned about the American voice in the whole matter and took it very seriously. Atkins was "upset" about the recent article which he and Kevin Cahill had published decrying British inaction. The Governor said that he felt a meeting on the lines indicated could be extremely valuable but he would not want to develop the initiative further without the Minister's agreement.

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Mr Ó hUiginn phoned me at home on Saturday, 4th August. He said that the Minister had spoken with the Governor the previous evening. In the conversation it had been suggested that if the Governor had any further word from Atkins he might phone the Minister's Office on Monday. Since Monday was a Bank Holiday the Minister asked that Carey be advised to pass any message to the Embassy hereor in Washington.

I phoned the Governor at a number in Berkshire. He told me that he had spoken to Atkins after his discussion with the Minister and he had mentioned that the Minister would be in New York in September for UNGA. He had offered to arrange a meeting on that occasion with the four and Atkins and the Minister in New York. He would host the meeting which would allow for informal discussion and be private so far as possible. Atkins' response was that he welcomed the idea subject to Cabinet clearance. He said that the emphasis of the meeting should be on security.\* He would be away on leave for two weeks and a definite response would have to await his return. The Governor said that he intended now to send letters to the Minister and to Mr Atkins formally inviting them to a meeting in New York in September. He said that he proposed to announce his proposal for a meeting on Monday, August 6th, when he would have returned to New York. He would advise Mr Nimitz in the State Department of his proposal. I asked the Governor whether the Minister would be aware that he intended to announce the proposal publicly. He said that he felt confident from his conversation with the Minister that the Minister was favourably disposed to the idea. He agreed to phone Ambassador Donlon in Washington on Monday before making any announcement in case there was any further message the Minister wished to convey to him.

I phoned Mr Siev in Dublin and asked him to pass on the above to the Minister. I asked him to draw the Minister's attention in particular firstly to Carey's intention to make public reference

\* I observed to the Governor that this would run counter to the accepted format of bilateral discussions between the two Ministers.

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to his proposal in New York and secondly to Atkins' comment that the emphasis of any such meeting should be on security.

The Minister phoned me that evening about 9.30 p.m. He asked me to speak to the Governor and to mention three points in particular which he felt required caution as regards any public announcement of the proposal at this stage. Firstly, it should be considered whether a public announcement would risk Atkins' backing away from the idea. Secondly, I should point to the problems which would arise both with us and with our American friends if the meeting were set publicly in the context of a discussion primarily on security issues. Thirdly, I should refer delicately, by way of general reference to the importance we attached to the efforts of the four American leaders in this matter, to the desirability of concertation with Speaker O'Neill and Senators Kennedy and Moynihan. While suggesting that public announcement of the proposal might be unwise immediately having regard to these considerations I should at the same time avoid any suggestion of lack of interest or fundamental disagreement on our part with the Governor's initiative.

I phoned the Governor and spoke to him on the lines indicated by the Minister. I reiterated the importance we attached to the efforts of the American leaders and to the evident significance of the fact that <sup>the</sup> British Government were now taking the American voice seriously. I put to the Governor the three points mentioned by the Minister relative to the timing of any announcement. Governor Carey said that he felt that he must make public reference to the idea at this stage. His discussions with Atkins were, he felt, important and it was very desirable that they be followed up and no opportunity lost. At the same time, he understood the points made by the Minister and he asked me to assure him that his public reference to the idea of a meeting would be carefully phrased and would make it quite clear that the idea of the meeting would be subject to the agreement of both Governments.

He would not go into any detail on the specifics of a meeting nor would he make any reference to Atkins' comment about the security aspect. He felt, however, that he must now announce the initiative publicly and it was proper that he, as Governor of the State of New York should invite the parties and host the meeting. He said that Atkins had told him that he could say that Atkins was personally interested by the idea. I asked him whether he would be in contact with his three American colleagues before making any announcement. He said that he would be back in New York on Sunday afternoon and he intended immediately to contact the three before making any announcement on Monday. He repeated also that he would telephone the Washington Embassy before making any announcement (in case there was any further message that we might convey to him at that point. I did not mention that Ambassador Donlon was in fact at present on leave).

I phoned the Minister again after talking to Carey. I said that it was clear that the Governor was determined to make public reference to his initiative on his return to New York. The Minister felt that, given the response which the Governor had made to the points he had put forward, there was no need to go back further to Carey at this stage.

I phoned Mr Siev after talking with the Minister and asked him to inform the Washington Embassy of these developments so that they would be fully in the picture when the Governor contacted the Embassy on Monday. I also asked him to inform Mr Walsh in the Department of the position.

The Governor seemed clearly to have formed a very favourable impression of Atkins (as also of Brian Cubbon) and to feel that he is determined to tackle the problems in a resolute and constructive manner. He said that the Secretary of State had acknowledged to him that he could see personally the force of the argument for unification although this was not his or the Government's policy. He said that Atkins had told him that he might bring his wife and children with him to New York if the meeting took place.

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J. Campbell  
6.8.'79