

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



<b>Reference Code:</b>	2014/105/825
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	5 November 1984
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	2 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
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# ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

SECRET

## NORTHERN IRELAND

Taoiseach,

As arranged, Messrs. Donlon, Ward, Lillis, Quigley and the undersigned met Armstrong, Goodall, Goodison, Bourn, and Brennan, on Friday and Saturday. The meeting began at approximately 5.00 p.m. on Friday and finished about 1.00 that night (including dinner). It was continued on the following day from 9.30 a.m. with brief meetings beforehand held by both sides separately) and concluded at approximately 5.00 p.m. (including lunch).

The British side came with two statements -

- (1) a statement of their position, which also purported to summarise the Irish position, which ~~they~~ said had been cleared by Ministers;
- (2) a draft passage on Northern Ireland for inclusion in the Summit Communique.

Sir Robert, Mr. Donlon and I also discussed separately arrangements for your meeting with the Prime Minister. A separate note is available on this.

The first statement, in its original draft, was quite far back. The British argued that to ensure that Ministers just did not say that the whole process should be discontinued and to keep the show on the road, they had to draft in this way. After prolonged discussion of the draft in plenary session, it was agreed that it should be analysed and largely redrafted, especially insofar as the statements of the Irish position were concerned, by two separate working groups. The paper then came back to plenary session when further changes were made.

It was suggested at one stage that the paper should be further developed and used as a common statement of both the Irish and British positions, for yourself and the Prime Minister before your forthcoming meeting. This however was not acceptable and what was finally agreed was that the Irish side should draw up a statement of position, for you and other Ministers concerned, corresponding to the "British statement of position" which will go to the Prime Minister and other Ministers on the British side.

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# ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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2.

The draft Communique passage on Northern Ireland was also discussed at some length at both separate meetings and in plenary. As you will see, it is a comparatively limited statement of where we are at now. At the same time, it is more expansive - if that is of any comfort - than the very brief statement issued after the Cosgrave/Heath meeting in Baldonnel in September, 1973, which led to Sunningdale. The wording is based, as far as we could make it, on Communiques issued after earlier meetings with the British Prime Minister and on the language of the Forum Report - in so far as we could get this included. I will go in detail into this if you wish.

The point was made, in relation to the Communique, that, as it stood, it might be difficult to get the message across that constitutional politics provided a real possibility for progress towards lasting peace and stability in Northern Ireland. Personally, I think that this may have been accepted, tentatively, by some on the British side, but as was continually emphasised, they are working, just as we are, on a very tight guide rope. Specifically, we kept the idea of a conference on the table, though the reaction to this was neutral, at best.

It is of vital importance now to form a judgement as to whether what is on offer - or can be obtained at your meeting with the Prime Minister - is sufficient politically to justify the action proposed on the Irish side. In particular, you will wish to consider SDLP involvement. Foreign Affairs (Mr. Lillis) are working on a document which will update the Government Memorandum on the subject - and on the "Irish statement of position" to correspond to the "British statement of position".

5th November, 1984.