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cc Taoiseach
 Minister
 Secretary
 Mr. Nally
 A-I Section
 A-I Secretariat

Discussion at lunch with Sidney Bailey 23 May 1986

Dear Assistant Secretary

I had Sidney Bailey to lunch at the Embassy today and we had an extended discussion in relation to Northern Ireland. As you may know he is a Quaker - he was the Quaker representative at the United Nations in the early 1960s - who has written extensively on such matters as the Security Council and its procedures and most recently has done a massive study of "how wars end". He was the main convenor of a distinguished human rights study group in relation to Northern Ireland which is still at work and about which we were in correspondence with the Department last year. I see him as having good contacts and being quietly influential behind the scenes; and I certainly find him more politically sophisticated and, in a way, less "innocent" (I use the word without offence) than most Quakers.

Molyneaux and Paisley

Bailey told me that he had been in Northern Ireland last week and had met a number of people there. He was not overly pessimistic about the present situation.

In particular he had a long discussion last Saturday (17 May) with Jim Molyneaux the OUP leader. He takes Molyneaux seriously but he also commented that in some respects he seems to live "in a fantasy world" (he instanced Molyneaux' belief that three days before the Hillsborough Agreement was signed Mrs Thatcher, under American pressure, had given up on the effort to get Dublin to agree to the removal of Articles 2 and 3 as part of the Agreement; and a belief by Molyneaux that talks (ie talks about talks?) which Unionist leaders had been about to engage in with Sir Robert Andrew and Sir Robert Armstrong (sic) a few weeks ago had been sabotaged by the fixing of the meeting of the Conference for the same day (9 May).

According to Molyneaux, Paisley had returned separately to Belfast, a few hours before Molyneaux himself, on 25 February after the meeting of the two Unionist leaders with Mrs Thatcher. Paisley, Molyneaux said, had been "taken away" to East Belfast and "politically mugged" for having agreed to the statement which issued after the meeting with Mrs Thatcher. According to Bailey, echoing Molyneaux, Paisley had never been really the same since.

I demurred slightly, commenting that our view had been that it would be a mistake to write off Paisley in favour of Robinson as Paisley represents something larger than his party. Bailey did not dispute this general point but he asked if we had noticed how little Paisley has been in evidence over the past two weeks or so. He implied that Paisley's health has not been good over that period and that he is rather "down".

Molyneaux's persistent complaint to Bailey had been that "Dublin has no real understanding of the depth of Unionist opposition to the Agreement". Bailey said that, as a result of this, he had said to Molyneaux "in that case why don't you try to get it across to them?" and he had suggested that he (Bailey) could help to set up a private meeting with me under Quaker auspices at William Penn House here in London in a couple of weeks time. Bailey asked me what my reaction to this would be and went on to "kick around" some ideas for the format of such a meeting.

I said that in general we are always open to contacts and that, speaking personally, I would have no problems about meeting Unionists. We agreed however that it might be best if I sounded you out about the idea first and we agreed that I would call Sidney Bailey on Wednesday next (28 May) to let him have a more considered reaction.

While I understood at first that what Bailey had been suggesting was a private meeting between Molyneaux and myself it appeared from our subsequent discussion that he (Bailey) having suggested the idea to Molyneaux and got a favourable reaction is rather open on the format and is casting around for the best line to take. He asked me for example if it would be better to try to get a group of four or five Unionists; and whether it might not be desirable to have a simple factual statement for the press saying that the meeting had taken place. While showing a general interest in the idea - since it appeared that Molyneaux had been ready for a discussion of some kind - I encouraged Bailey in the view that, if anything were to be done, it would probably be wiser to think of a small, informal and private meeting with him (either in his own house or in William Penn House) at which I could listen to any views that might be conveyed to me. I also said that I thought it a bit unlikely that the Unionists themselves would want to have a larger meeting and a press release - however innocuous - since they would fear that that would be portrayed as "Unionists open talks".

The whole thing may appear a bit naive as I report it - or even dangerous - but Bailey does have good contacts and appears to have Molyneaux' agreement to something. So you might be able to let me have a quick reaction from Dublin to the whole idea before Wednesday next.

Police Federation (RUC)

Bailey met with Wright and S (?) . They were very critical of Hermon and his relations with the force. I assumed that this was a politically motivated criticism arising from a belief that Hermon was "supporting the Anglo-Irish Agreement". Bailey said this was not at all the case - the criticism was that Hermon is remote and inaccessible so far as the ordinary RUC are concerned-unlike his predecessor Sir Kenneth Newman who always allowed access and dialogue about complaints. Bailey had the impression from his Police Federation contacts that while there was a certain measure of pride in Hermon as a "local boy" they would on balance prefer to see him replaced by an outsider.

The Secretariat

Bailey said he thought we should know that there is either a mole in the Secretariat or that documents are being fabricated. He said he had talked with a clergyman* who told him he had in his possession a document consisting of a message from Dublin to the Secretariat before the Portadown march some months ago instructing them to press the British side to have the march re-routed. Bailey seemed quite convinced that the document does exist though he does not know whether it is fabrication or not. He had tried to get a copy and has not yet succeeded although he seemed to think he might be able to get one.

Foundation Funds

Bailey told me that he is in a position to advise on the expenditure of certain funds by a Foundation. (While he did not say I wonder if it might be the Rowntree Trust?). They have in the past provided funds to help with the staffing of three informal Inter-Party Committees at Westminster on issues of current importance such as arms control (these are not of course the Select Committees established by Parliament itself). He wondered if there was anything of the kind in relation to Northern Ireland which might be deserving of support? We talked in a general way of the activities of the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group and he touched also on the BIA and the Irish Information Partnership - though he did not think either of the latter was quite the kind of thing he had in mind. He will think further about this.

Human Rights Group

He told me that there are regular meetings of this body and left me the attached copy of an outline of the report which they hope to publish next year. They meet regularly in Dublin, Belfast, London and Glasgow. The only hitch so far was that Stephen McGonagle who had threatened to resign on various issues eventually did so on a particular point.

UN Security Council

It might be of interest also to add that Bailey told me he is at present up-dating his book which is, I think, called "Procedure and Practice of the UN Security Council" (which we tended to look on as something of a "Bible" in New York in 1981 and 1982).

Yours sincerely



Noel Dorr
Ambassador

Mr Eamon O Tuathail
Assistant Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2

* I wonder if this might have been Rev. Martin Smyth?

(M)