



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2016/52/94
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	25 February 1986
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	9 pages
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for Ann See O'Tuathail from

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Molyneaux paisley press conference. / 25/2/86 (Notes) ~~London~~

(Royal treatment by Lord O'Leary)

Molyneaux read statement.

~~We~~ Molyneaux We have agreed first of all to consult our colleagues in our two parties and we have agreed to reflect upon the statement and on the general discussion which lasted one and a half hours. We have to make clear there is no meetings of minds as far as the anglo irish agreement is concerned. You will see that the prime minister reiterates that she is determined to implement the agreement and we for our part made it quite clear that we would reflect upon the suggestions for various discussions and other progress on the understanding that we in our two parties did not accept and could not accept that those discussions from our part would be within the terms of the anglo irish agreement. In other words we made it quite clear that it should not be assumed that any participation in discussions implied ~~that~~ acceptance by us of the anglo irish agreement.

paisley I might just add to that the prime minister has made a commitment to the implementation of the anglo irish agreement and of course as unionists with our mandate we are totally opposed to its implementation, and in fact our first question to the prime minister was a simple one. Are you prepared to consider an alternative to and a replacement of the anglo irish agreement and then we presented her with the statement that she claimed <sup>made</sup> to ~~Ms~~ Ms ~~Mc~~ Mc ~~Cartan~~ Cartan in the belfast telegraph on december 12th 1985 where she said (quoting) the people of northern ireland can get rid of the intergovernmental conference by agreeing to devolved government? And our proposal was lets start with devolved government and when we get it, then the intergovernmental conference falls. The prime minister is still committing herself to implementing the anglo irish agreement... I would have thought that the prime minister could have said to us - look, I will not continue to implement this while we have ~~for~~ for further discussions. She has made it clear in her statement that she's going to continue to implement it. She then put

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forward the four areas for discussion, consultation between the unionist leaders and the government about the way northern ireland is governed. The second issue concerned the assembly. the third was concerning how northern ireland business is done here in parliament by order in council or by primary legislation and then our call for a round table conference to discuss devolution. We made it clear to her that after we reported back and considered these matters that in no way could we sit down round a table within the parameters of the anglo irish agreement. But if these proposals were outside the anglo irish agreement and were on the basis of new discussions of new proposals, then we could reflect on that and bring her back her answer shortly. But in no way will we sit down at a conference table within the parameters of the anglo irish agreement. She then of course pointed out in her statement that if fruit came from those discussions then the intergovernmental conference would have to be reconsidered, because the agreement itself says that where matters are devolved they would no longer come under the ambit of the anglo irish intergovernmental conference.

Q. Does the strike go ahead on march the 3rd?

Molyneaux. I don't know. You would have to address that to the people various groups and people who are talking about strikes and protests. It's not a question Mr Paisley and I could answer because we've heard stories of leaflets being distributed in various towns in northern ireland but we've not had any complimentary copies.

Q. How do you assess if its not within the parameters of the anglo irish agreement ?

Molyneaux. We ourselves will be in a position to decide as each matter is discussed and as each process is gone through, we would make a decision ourselves as to whether we regarded that as something which tied us in with the anglo irish agreement and at that point we would draw the line.

Paisley

we also made it clear to her that ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ if she is going to say these meetings are all within the parameters of the anglo irish conference that we will not have anything to do with them. She can't say one~~s~~ one hand - oh, these are all within the parameters of the anglo irish conference and us say no they are not. We made it clear that these are completely new talks, they're nothing to do with the anglo irish agreement. She has to face up to that. #

Q If more talks would you discourage any extra-parliamentary activity in the meantime ?

Molyneux. We havn't ever encouraged such an operation. We have said, the two of us, that we have been giving a load in the parliamentary, electoral, constitutional process and through those processes alone we have made it quite clear that ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ if we were brushed aside by her majesty's government and our views completely ignored it would not be for us to make a decision because our authority to make any decision would be eroded. I don't think that the outcome of today's deliberations would indicate that we are quite at the end of that road. #

Paisley. I also said to her personally that a one day strike would be a sunday school picnic to what she could expect if she goes on implementing this agreement. This meeting was absolutely frank. and straight. ~~There~~ I brought her back to mr mccartan's very interesting article in which she said that she was amazed at the reaction of unionists to the agreement. I said who were you talking to ? I said now that we are here we'd better tell you how we feel at the present time so that you'll not be amazed the next time.

Q What will you tell your constituents happened today ?

Molyneux. That the prime minister has put before us proposals. That certain other suggestions were put forward verbally in the course of the discussions. We will be reporting those to our colleagues in our two parties and that we have given an undertaking to reflect upon those propositions put to us.

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Paisley

And could we say the prime minister has also to reflect on what we said. We said to her ~~xxx~~ we want you to reflect whether you are prepared to continue this arrangement while such discussions are taking place.

Q. Did you directly ask Mrs Thatcher to suspend the agreement ?

Molyneaux. Yes, we indicated that ~~xxx~~ if the talks were to be fruitful, well then, to provide the necessary conditions, that it would be advisable to suspend the activities of the intergovernmental conference. She regards herself as being bound to implement the agreement. I suggested there was nothing in the agreement to require them to hold monthly meetings. That point wasn't disputed. She simply reiterated the point that she considered herself bound by an international agreement.

Q. Will you consider the proposals while the agreement goes on ?

Molyneaux. We have agreed that we will reflect upon these proposals and that we will consult with our own colleagues and thereafter, depending on their decision we'll decide whether or not we will participate in the various discussions. The discussions will ~~include~~ include things which have nothing to do with the anglo irish agreement and one of them is about the arrangements for handling northern ireland business in parliament. That's a matter for parliament itself. In many ways, that will be a test of the validity of the assertion that the agreement does not in any way breach sovereignty and does not affect the status of northern ireland.

Paisley We have made it absolutely clear to her that if she was going to try and sell this within the anglo irish parameter then in no way would we have anything to do with it. She also has to reflect, and the result of her reflections will also tell on our decisions

Q. were the talks a breakthrough ?

Paisley. Well all I can say is that if mrs thatcher <sup>still</sup> feels she must implement the agreement - and we fell as we told her that the agreement practically puts an end to the ~~ix~~ union, and as far as the northern ireland people are concerned we utterly and totally reject it. She then says to us, here are four things we want to discuss with you. If they are outside the parameters of the anglo irish agreement - yes. If they are argued to be inside them, we cannot have discussions on them - and you should reflect on something prime minister. Do you stand over the words that you stated to mr mccartan that the way we can get rid of the anglo irish agreement is to get devolution. If you stand over those wprds, then why do you not have a round table conference on devolution and lets start dismantling the anglo irish agreement.

Q. Have you preconditions for talks on devolution. John Hume said while he wanted power sharing he would go into talks without preconditions.

Paisley John Hume said that the precondition was that they must be under the parameters of the anglo irish agreement. In no way, he said, would he have these talks outside the anglo irish agreement. Are you telling me john hume will talk to us outside the anglo irish agreement on these matters ? That would be a breakthrough alright.

Molyneaux We havn't set preconditions other than that condition that we do not accept that we recognise the anglo irish agreement or that we intend to play any part in the working of that agreement. That's the sole precondition.

Paisley - we're keeping her to her statement - the people of northern ireland can get rid of the intergovernmental conference by agreeing to devolved government.

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molyneaux Attitudes on the part of both governments could change regarding the agreement in the interval if progress were made.

~~Paisley's interpretation~~

X Paisley. Her interpretation of the agreement and the taoiseach's are entirely ~~fit~~ different (mccartan interview again)

Molyneaux said there was a lot more behind arrangements concerning legislation in commons re northern ireland.

Asked if the new proposals were a rival ~~taxxk~~ anglo unionist conf ?

Paisley No I see this as a way to dismantle the whole machinery of the anglo irish conference. we are not going to be sucked into something by any british government or prime minister that's going to give any credence or authority to the anglo irish agreement. Our aim is to destroy it. #

a. Has anything changed as a result of the meeting.

Molyneaux We have got away from what I think was anticipated to be a deadlock situation where it was expected by a lot of observers that the prime minister would simply say I have signed the agreement and I am determined to stick by that and have nothing further to say to you. That was not her attitude. She put before us matters which require very serious consideration. Our battle has not been won by any means but we are going to reflect and consult within our two parties on what has been put before us and if its decided that we then proceed to explore these avenues which are now open to us there s a very real prospect that a, we will do much to reverse the agreement and hopefully get rid of it ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ eventually, and b, that we will repair the damage that has been done to the union. by the agreement. #

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X Paisley John hume and seamus mallon said she would face us down. She said she would reflect on the views we put to her and also that the intergovernmental conference could be changed

Q. Will you postpone direct action now ?

molyneaux That will be for those who presumably were rumoured to be planning direct action. It will be for them to decide. There 's no advice that we can give to them, that's not our role.

Q. will you advise your constituents not to engage in direct action ? until you see how things develop.

People will very sho tly have concluded that we havn't reached the end of that road, that the elected representatives are still in being, that we still have a role, they will conclude that we are not at the end of the road, the door was not slammed. #

Q. are you considering getting onvolved in consultations despite the existence of the AI agreement. Is it no longer a cow on the line ?

Paisley We are going to reflect. We didn't say to her we are prepared to enter into these negotiations. we also made it clear it was our aim to bring down the anglo irish agreement. (How long ?) It will depend largely on her reflection.

Q. Did you detect mrs thatcher was about to shift her ground ?

Molyneaux. Well she didn't adopt the attitude all of you were led to expect. She seemed to be responding to what we said through the election campaign. We're going into this operatiojn in a spirit of consultation and not confrontation. That could be said for the prime minister's attitude today.

Q. Are you staying at westminster

molyneaux unrealistic to expect us to revert to the normal pattern of parliamentary practice and that still holds good.

molyneaux paisley

Q. What does Mrs Thatcher have to do to persuade you that the AI conf is not an obstacle to continued consultations with her.

molyneaux There's no obstacle to consultations with the prime minister. As to political development as opposed to discussions, the problem would be if it were suggested that there would be some form of structure which would quite clearly merely suck us in to the processes of the AI agreement, then that we'll refuse.

Q. initiative for round table conference

Paisley The prime minister would have to chair the first session of it. This wouldn't be inter party talks. This would be a round table conference set up by the British government

Q. can you make position absolutely clear on strike

molyneaux we haven't been invited to join the picket lines, we don't know who's ~~responsible~~ sponsoring the strike. I would imagine that when those groups who one has heard of as contemplating strike I'm not sure on what day this is supposed to happen. When they read and listen to what was said today it may be that they will come to the conclusion that whatever plans they had laid will not be put into action. I can't speak for them

Paisley. If Jim Molyneaux and Ian Paisley feel that there's got to be action in Northern Ireland of that kind, Ian Paisley and Jim Molyneaux will be calling for it. ~~responsible~~  
If there's going to be action in Northern Ireland, the leaders will be giving the call for the appropriate action within the law.

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paisley If someone goes off at a tangent, go and talk to them.

paisley interview.

won concessions ? I said to her you couldn't expect us to talk about anything while the anglo irish conference is going about its work. She did say if these talks came to fruition the intergovernmental conference would have to be reconsidered

The important part of this conference is her reflection ...expect to hear in weeks rather than months

we will review the situation carefully. there ~~will~~ may be those who will feel that mrs thatcher has not given enough and therefore the pressure should be put on her. There will be others who will say let us hold and give her an opportunity to see what she comes up with. When that decision's taken we'll know how we are going to react.