



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2016/52/94
Creation Dates:	19 March 1986
Extent and medium:	4 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
Accession Conditions:	Open
Copyright:	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

19 March, 1986.

Mr. Alex Kane,
2 Victoria Street,
Belfast BT1 3GE.

Dear Mr. Kane,

I have been asked by the Taoiseach, Dr. Garret FitzGerald T.D., to thank you for your letter of 5 March, 1986 concerning the Northern Ireland problem.

The Taoiseach fully accepts that unionists cannot be coerced into accepting new political or constitutional structures in Northern Ireland, but this does not mean that they should be allowed to hold a veto over the implementation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement which, it must be stressed, was agreed by both sovereign Governments in the interests of both communities in Northern Ireland. Unionist objections and protests against the Agreement have been based on several false premises among which is the assertion that it threatens the constitutional position of Northern Ireland. This assertion is incorrect in that the Government fully accept that a change in the constitutional position in Northern Ireland can only come about with the consent of a majority of the people in Northern Ireland. This is expressly stated in Article 1 of the Agreement.

The Taoiseach would clearly not accept that the Agreement is unworkable. Both Governments are fully committed to implementing the Agreement in the interests of providing conditions of lasting peace and stability in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the Agreement also provides for the possibility of devolution of powers to political representatives in Northern Ireland on

Tithe an Rialtais, Baile Atha Cliath 2.
Government Buildings, Dublin 2.

Registry,

~~Please CS on 24404~~
~~and meter.~~

~~Paul H^{CE}~~
19/3/86

P.A on 24404

M.C.
20/3/86



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

2.

a basis acceptable to both communities there. Devolved powers on such a basis could ensure that representatives of both communities have a greater say in the affairs of government there and thereby lay the foundations for a climate of greater co-operation and trust.

Concerning your proposals for integration, such a proposal would be totally unacceptable to nationalists in Northern Ireland and, indeed, to a sizeable proportion of unionists. The Government, therefore, would not see such a proposal being workable or desirable.

The Taoiseach has asked me to thank you once again for writing to him with your views. I hope that the above information will be of some assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

Paul McElhinney.

13 March, 1986.

Mr. Alex Kane,
2 Victoria St.,
Belfast BT1 3GE.

Dear Mr. Kane,

Thank you for your letter of 5th March, 1986, addressed to the Taoiseach, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, T.D., and for letting him have your views on the Northern Ireland situation.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE J. SHAW

Private Secretary
to the Taoiseach.

Mr. B. McCarthy.

Transmitted for your attention
and direct reply please.

Mr. B. McCarthy
PH^{CE}
18/3/86

2 Victoria Street,

Belfast BT1 3GE.

5/3/86.

Dear *Prime Minister*,

I hope that you will forgive me for writing to you and pestering you with a question. I suspect that you have enough on your plate at the moment, but I would be grateful if you could find the time to answer this question.

Assuming you accept the following:

- (1) Unionists will not be bombed, bullied, blackmailed, nor bartered into a United Ireland or into any constitutional set-up which gives the appearance of leading to such a unification.
- (2) Non Unionists will neither help to establish nor support a system of devolved government for this Province which enshrines the principle of majority rule for Unionists.
- (3) After fourteen years of summits, forums, committees and commissions there seems to be little likelihood of any "first choice" solution being found in the near future.
- (4) Direct Rule is unpopular and the Anglo/Irish Agreement unworkable. (The latter part of that sentence is an opinion rather than a political judgment.)

Assuming you desire the following:

- (1) Democratic structures and institutions at local, Provincial and national levels in which consensus and acceptance of differences can be accommodated and through which Protestants and Roman Catholics could work as equals.
- (2) The development of the kind of framework which would enable the minority's views and aims to be underwritten by the authority of the Eire government without compromising U.K. sovereignty.
- (3) The creation of a political climate in which the two communities can learn to live together, work together and trust each other; and in which the Eire and U.K. governments can conduct relations on an open and above board basis.
- (4) A political programme which can contribute to the underpinning and preservation of a framework that promises a real chance for peace, gives hope to everybody and provides a basis for faith in the future of the democratic process.

Why then will you not consider Integration as a possible solution to the problem? It may not be your first or even second choice, but how much longer and at what price can you pretend that there is any other viable solution?

Yours ever,

Alex. Kane.