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17 Grosvenor Place

SW1X 7HR

cc. Taoiseach
 Minister
 Secretary
 Mr. Nally
 Mr. O'Tuathail
 A-I Secretariat

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 ANGLO-IRISH SECTION
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6 November 1986

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O'Leary/Hadden Initiative

Dear Eamon

I reported to you in my telex (C203) today on my call on David Goodall on Wednesday afternoon about the misrepresentation by Professor O'Leary of the view which he conveyed to him on the "O'Leary initiative".

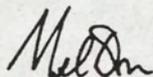
As often, I was a bit inhibited about putting too much detail into a telex in relation to discussions here. I am now taking the opportunity to send you by safe hand a full note on my discussion with Goodall which includes a substantial extract, which I noted verbatim, from his letter to Robert Andrew written immediately after his talk with O'Leary.

I might add that, as I mentioned to the Taoiseach when he phoned me, I had been talking to David Goodall just outside the dining hall in Christchurch Oxford on the Sunday of the BIA Conference when Professor O'Leary came to join us. O'Leary, rather naively to my view, argued for a few minutes in favour of suspension of the Agreement. His argument was largely directed to Goodall. Goodall however replied quite strongly, holding firmly to the Agreement and saying that it could not be suspended. This exchange, at which I happened to be present a few weeks ago, left me with two definite impressions (i) that if another Catherwood initiative is desirable, O'Leary was certainly/^{not} the best one to undertake it; (ii) that Goodall's account of his exchange with O'Leary on 24 October is much more likely to be correct than the summary account of what O'Leary subsequently relayed to you.

As I suggested in my telex however I think it would be a mistake to see what has happened as a case of deliberate mis-representation by O'Leary. I think it is first a question of someone who is a bit lacking in judgement and who is fooling himself somewhat by focussing on the limited positive comments made to him while virtually ignoring the more substantial cautionary and sceptical aspects of what was said. Secondly of course there is the point that what I had to show to Goodall yesterday was a single sentence summary report of what O'Leary said to you, which in turn was his incautiously optimistic summary of what Goodall had said to him a week previously.

However, I am sure I do not need to labour these points to you at this stage.

Yours sincerely



Noel Dorr
Ambassador

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

6 November 1986

Discussion between David Goodall and Professor Con O'Leary
24 October 1986

When I called on him at the Foreign Office on the afternoon of Wednesday, 5 November David Goodall read to me the following extract, which I noted verbatim, from his letter to Robert Andrew at NIO reporting on his meeting with Professor O'Leary:

"I said that as far as the British Government was concerned it should be clearly understood that the Agreement was not an end in itself but a means to achieve reconciliation and, if possible, devolution in Northern Ireland"

(He then made some brief reference to the fact that Robert Armstrong had said this at the BIA meeting in Oxford).

"To that extent I thought we would be sympathetic to any points or conditions for starting talks (ie talks on devolution) to which all of the other interested parties - the OUP, DUP, SDLP, together with the Irish Government - could agree.

That said it seemed to me that the five points O'Leary had given me boiled down to the well-established Unionist demand for the Agreement to be suspended as a prior condition to any talks taking place. I could not imagine either John Hume or the Irish Government agreeing to the closure of the Maryfield Secretariat; nor would it seem to me that in the current pre-electoral atmosphere, Dr FitzGerald would be prepared to declare his readiness to consider a fundamental revision of the Agreement in order to entice the Unionists back to the negotiating table.

The Prime Minister was not going to back away from the Agreement.

O'Leary acknowledged all this but clearly believed that his exercise was nevertheless worth pursuing. I did not seek to dissuade but again urged him to de-brief himself to you".

Apart from the foregoing extract which he read out to me and which I noted verbatim, Goodall told me that the tone of his comment to O'Leary had been "extremely sceptical" and he had been "emphatic" in what he said. He had also made it quite clear that he could not, as O'Leary had requested, give "a British Government reaction". That was not his business. He suggested that O'Leary talk to Robert Andrew whose responsibility it was; and he made clear that all his comments to O'Leary were on a personal basis only.

O'Leary had told him that he had spoken with Molyneaux as Paisley had been ill (but he let it be understood that Paisley agreed). O'Leary said that Molyneaux was a greatly under-rated politician. The discussion between O'Leary and Molyneaux had been friendly. It was clear that Molyneaux wished to get down to serious negotiation and that he feels he is no longer opposed in the party on his willingness to accept power sharing.

Goodall further outlined his discussion with O'Leary as follows:

O'Leary had shown him the five points which he thought could meet the necessary conditions for talks on devolution to start and had asked for "a preliminary reaction" on behalf of the British Government. Goodall had replied "that is not my business" and had said he should speak to Andrew. Having said that he had looked at the points which O'Leary handed to him and asked questions about them.

He said that one thing at least he could say, as Robert Armstrong had said at the BIA, was that the British Government does not see the Agreement as an end in itself but as a means of achieving reconciliation and devolution in Northern Ireland. (He then went on to make the points reported in his letter to Andrew from which I have quoted verbatim above).

Goodall said that in discussion with O'Leary he had gone on to say that the five points could hardly have much attraction since they amounted to suspension of the Agreement; and the Prime Minister had made clear that it was not going to be suspended. O'Leary said that meetings of the Conference would continue even though the Secretariat would be closed. Goodall said that they had heard this before. He thought it unrealistic to speak of "closure of the Secretariat". It had enormous importance for the SDLP and the Irish Government.

O'Leary replied that his information was that life was extremely difficult for the Irish personnel in the Secretariat and that it would be better to work from Dublin. Goodall had said this was not his information although he knew that their situation was not comfortable. But if the Irish Government were to say so no doubt the British would have to look at it but he could see no possibility of this happening.

As to point four about "reformulation of Articles 2 and 3" he (Goodall) could not see either Government wanting, in effect, to renegotiate the Agreement on this basis.

Having compared my text of the points as conveyed in your telex No C300 with his own text Goodall pointed out that in paragraph 4 his text had "if Agreement on other methods can be reached" where ours had "if agreement on other matters can be reached". He thought his text was correct.

In discussion with O'Leary the latter had explained that the idea of the referendum referred to in paragraph 5 would be to cover Molyneaux against a charge of having negotiated over the heads of the Unionists. There would however be a clear understanding that Molyneaux and Paisley would campaign in favour in such a referendum if the arrangements were acceptable.

Goodall said he had told O'Leary that he did not want to discourage him from exploring - although he thought the Catherwood initiative had not been very helpful. However, he hoped he would please debrief himself (sic) to Robert Andrew whose business it was. O'Leary then said "can I say that you are content?" Goodall said "no, it is not a matter for me; and for the reasons given I do not think that the points amount to more than a reformulation of the Unionist position". He had in the end and sceptically wished O'Leary "good luck" if he wanted to continue and had confirmed that O'Leary proposed also to talk to the Irish side.

M. J. Don
London

O'Leary/Hadden Initiative

1. Professors O'Leary and Hadden of QUB called to the Department on 30 October to discuss a proposal to get devolution talks started. They were met by Assistant Secretary O'Tuahtail and the undersigned.
2. Their initiative is entirely separate to that of Sir F Catherwood. They believe that time is running out with elections due in both Ireland and Britain and that talks should start quickly.

Initiative Meetings

3. Professor O'Leary saw Molyneaux who spoke on behalf of himself and Paisley and expressed a strong interest in the draft formula proposed by O'Leary and Hadden - (see attached), O'Leary then saw Goodall who said that if J. Hume and the Irish Government agreed to the terms, the UK would not stand in the way. (Goodall also asked, however, what was in the terms for Hume and the Irish Government). Kevin Boyle was to see Hume either on the 30th or shortly afterwards to put him in the picture. Molyneaux is to consult Paisley and Goodall to pass on the proposals to the NIO.

Comments on Paragraphs of Formula

4. Molyneaux was very insistent on Paragraphs 1 and 2 - suspension of meetings and the location of the Secretariat: under Paragraph 3 the Conference should be limited to inter State business only, and the possibility of the Conference re-establishing its current wide range of functions if devolution failed should be removed entirely. (Hadden did not expect that we would agree to this and was open to suggestions). It appeared that Paragraph 4 would not be pushed very hard by O'Leary and Hadden in the light of the political difficulties of getting a referendum adopted. Perhaps it could be held after some years of satisfactory operation of a N.I. Government. A referendum in N.I. would be vital (Paragraph 5) but with only SF and the Ulster Clubs opposed it should be passed by 70 per cent, giving great moral authority to the new Government. This was essential as Molyneaux and Paisley are each in a minority in their parties.

RESPONSE

Mr O Tuathail said that the Irish side welcomed all solid initiatives aimed at getting movement. We would refer the document to the Taoiseach and the Minister and let them know our response. He drew attention, however, to the statements of the Irish and British Governments in response to the Catherwood initiative in September and said that our position remained as set out then. He pointed to major differences between that position and the Hadden/O'Leary paper referring, inter alia, to the question of the Secretariat about which there was no room for discussion. There were serious obstacles in the rest of the paper also.