



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

<b>Reference Code:</b>	2017/10/48
<b>Creation Dates:</b>	May 1987
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	6 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of the Taoiseach
<b>Accession Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.



OIFIG AN AIRE GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA  
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BAILE ATHA CLIATH 2  
DUBLIN 2

520876

May 1987

Mr. Tom King,  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,  
Stormont Castle,  
Belfast.

194:8  
19629  
16272  
24532  
20876  
20705

Dear Tom,

I would like you to know what a good meeting I thought we had on 22 April. I felt also that our informal meeting on 6 April provided us with a very useful opportunity to survey a wide range of issues under the Agreement. I was greatly encouraged by your commitment to the work of the Conference—a commitment I fully share. I have been considering how best we can take forward the work we have put in hand.

The issue of security cooperation has been highlighted by the recent increase of violence and the tragic loss of civilians lives. I have made clear our intention through security cooperation between our police forces to see that the perpetrators of all such acts of violence and terror throughout the island of Ireland are brought to justice. At the Conference meeting, we agreed that our police forces would proceed with joint studies as proposed in paragraph 7 of your paper and report through the Quadripartite Group. I understand that this work is going ahead as envisaged.

The Provisional IRA are clearly seeking to undermine support for constitutional nationalism. It is very important at this time that we be seen to make progress on issues of particular interest to nationalists. We need to be able to show them that it is through cooperation in the Intergovernmental Conference, and not through violence, that their real interests can be advanced. For this reason I am anxious that work should proceed rapidly in a number of other important areas which we have discussed or outlined.

We have agreed that officials will meet soon to discuss interim measures on fair employment, including your draft revised Guide to Manpower Policy and Practice. I mentioned to you also the importance of training. I propose that officials should consider in detail the merits of expanding the range of specialised courses in Government Training Centres such as Boucher Road in Belfast, Springtown in Derry, and Downpatrick and Newry, and also the possibility of opening new centres in areas of special need such as West Belfast and Strabane. I

suggest also that the operation of the Action for Community Enterprise (ACE) scheme should be examined. It would be most desirable to increase the overall number of ACE places for the long-term unemployed. I would ask you also to consider the regulations governing acceptance of applications. I have in mind the requirement that an applicant for an ACE place must be unemployed for twelve of the previous fifteen months and that participation in Government Training Centres or in colleges of further education counts as employment for that purpose.

We agreed to examine the whole area of economic, social and cultural issues including cross-border economic cooperation.

It would be useful if our officials through the Secretariat were to begin the detailed preparation of the files on cross-border economic cooperation. I suggest that this work should start without delay.— This will allow us to have a good discussion at the next regular meeting of the Conference. We might choose a number of specific issues, such as tourism, fisheries, science and technology and possibly education. Some of these areas are being considered separately by the Board of the International Fund. Education was the subject of a special report - the Williams Report - issued jointly in February 1985 by our Economic Councils, the NIEC and NESC.

Last week, we put forward proposals for action in the short-term regarding nationalist areas. In Belfast, it is essential that the proposed Urban Area Plan should take full account of nationalist interests.

The Irish language is, of course, of great symbolic importance to nationalists. You have referred to a number of issues as ripe for decision: this would be an appropriate moment to bring these forward. You have been considering an amendment of the 1949 Act to remove the provision by which street names may be put up or painted in the English language only, the preparation of a Gazetteer of the Irish language versions of place names in Northern Ireland and the provision of increased funding through the Arts Council for Irish language activities. I understand that an Ordinance Survey map in both languages is at an advanced stage of preparation which could now be published. An announcement of your intention to take action on these lines would be very helpful at the present stage.

Our attempts to assess the progress being made on RUC accompaniment of the armed forces in their contact with the community require that the statistics be prepared and presented regularly. These are now seriously out of date and I would ask you to expedite the presentation of figures for the period since 31 August last year. You were good enough to set out the position on the Code of Conduct for the RUC when we met. The Chief Constable gave a commitment as long ago as the first Conference meeting on 11 December 1985 that he would introduce a Code as soon as possible in 1986, such a Code to include even-handed discharging of duties and with equal respect for

the unionist and nationalist identities and traditions. It is essential that such a Code should issue without further delay. I would ask you also to keep me informed through the Secretariat of action on the Stalker/Sampson reports.

May I also take the opportunity of this letter to refer to the events at Loughgall on Friday last. We asked you through the Secretariat to be mindful of the need to avoid any sense of triumphalism on the part of your authorities. I appreciate your handling of this matter over the weekend. It is necessary that sensitivity be shown in regard to the funerals which are now taking place and that the investigation of the events should pay particular attention to the question of whether such a large number of fatal casualties, including the civilian casualty, could have been avoided. I would be grateful to be kept informed on this matter through the Secretariat.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you for the understanding which you showed in our telephone conversation last week. I hope that we can make use of these informal exchanges on a regular basis in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Lenihan, T.D.,  
Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Tanaiste's letter and related business  
(For O Tuathail from Lillis)

I spoke to Elliott last night at about 11.00 p.m. about these matters. Along with most senior officials in Stormont as well as Stormont Ministers he was to attend a meeting in London with King starting this morning at 9.30.

I handed him the letter to King in a closed envelope and gave him a copy for his information.

I said to him that, while we were being careful in what we said about the Loughgall incident, it was important to underline the fact that the killing of the eight IRA participants - represented by the RUC as the entire attacking party - had had and was still having a strong impact on nationalists north and south. This type of comprehensive and extreme result, involving as it did British armed forces, touched a nerve in every nationalist, even the most moderate. Many people, including the Leader of our Opposition, were asking why could not some or all of the gunmen have been arrested or even shot in the legs. It was vital that the authorities here should be extremely careful, particularly in the run up to the election, to avoid provoking this nerve further. I said that the handling of the matter by the Secretary of State and the handling of yesterday's funerals by the RUC had demonstrated considerable sensitivity and that this was appreciated.

I argued that, given the disturbed atmosphere in nationalist circles, it was not even more important that before Loughgall, particularly in view of the election here, that action be taken to reassure nationalists in terms of nationalist desiderata under the Agreement. I underlined the importance in the context of paragraphs 4, 7 and 8 as well as the second half of paragraph 9 of the Tanaiste's letter.

I said that the Tanaiste, in drafting his message, had carefully refrained from referring to the election itself for reasons to do with the proprieties. Nevertheless the other side would understand that this was what we had in mind. I reminded Elliott of the priority which the Tanaiste had said the election had for our Government and of the considerable work that has been done under his instructions in the Secretariat in this area since the last meeting of the Conference. Elliott took this point and said that he would have it pursued at this morning's meeting with the Secretary of State which would involve all key authorities in the Northern Ireland Government. He added that we would be aware that the Secretary of State shared the Irish Government's priorities in relation to the electoral result on the nationalist side.

Elliott said that there might be certain difficulties about announcing or making certain decisions for any policies during an election period. I said that I did not know any democracy where an outgoing Government felt inhibited, during an election campaign, in holding forth the prospect of future action or decisions.

On Loughgall, Elliott expressed considerable appreciation on behalf of King on the statement made by the Tanaiste and of the sensitive handling of the matter by the Government's press spokesmen.

On the question of what actually happened and how it might have been avoided and modified, he said that it was his understanding on the basis of preliminary investigations that the security judgement had been that it would have been unacceptably risky to seek to arrest or restrain the particular group of gunmen who were involved and whose activities were by and large known beforehand. He had been told that, had some such course been attempted, there would have been considerably more casualties in Loughgall in the judgement of the security forces. Nevertheless the political impact of the events, which I had referred to, was well understood and was reflected in the

course of action and the comments by the Secretary of State and Hermon following the incident.

I said that, in addition to the immediate business of Loughgall and electoral concerns, we also wished to press ahead in the preparation of the next meeting of the Conference and I emphasised here matters in paragraphs 5 and 6 and the second half of paragraph 9 of the Tanaiste's letter. Elliott said that this work, so far as his side were concerned, would proceed subject to the availability of officials.

O'Ceallaigh will seek today to organise the schedule of meetings accordingly.

Elliott had seen on the evening television news reports of problems the Gardai had encountered with the Provisional IRA firing party at Emyvale. He commented, in an informal and unoffensive way, that many of the people to whom our representations on the handling of funerals had been passed in recent months would probably react to these pictures in a fairly predictable way.

As reported elsewhere, the same event is dominating local radio and television morning news coverage here. Against a background where the performance and professionalism of our security forces as perceived here has been most impressive for some time, this episode is in itself unfortunate. It has not helped to reinforce the authority of our credentials in giving advice to the authorities here on the handling of similar events on this side of the border, although there are, of course, fundamental differences between situations on either side of that line.