



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2017/10/55
Creation Dates:	16 March 1987
Extent and medium:	3 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.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

17 Grosvenor Place

SWIX 7HR

521539CONFIDENTIAL - BY COURIER SERVICE

16 March 1987

Tánaiste
cc Secretary
A-I Section
A-I Secretariat
Box



24404
14624
21539

Dear Assistant Secretary

Lunch with John Boyd, Deputy Under-Secretary of State, FCO
(David Goodall's successor).

1. Boyd has just returned from Hong Kong where he has been Political Adviser to the Governor. He is a China expert but has served too in Washington, Bonn and New York. He has as you know inherited Goodall's total "bag" of responsibilities including Ireland and Intelligence (about which he spoke with some frankness).

He is very direct and personable, and has a clear enthusiasm for his Irish responsibilities. He has already been to Belfast and is anxious to visit Dublin as soon as possible to meet yourself, Dermot Nally and any other officials recommended to him: he asked whether, if convenient, you could arrange this shortly.

2. He has, he said, no doubts about the Prime Minister's commitment to the Agreement and her enthusiasm for continued implementation. This for her, he said, means of course an emphasis on continually developing security co-operation, and he said he was sure that successes in this area will have a very good effect on her.

He was himself a little taken aback but not, he said, surprised at the strong line taken by the Prime Minister in her recent farewell meeting with (then) Ambassador Dorr (he had seen their internal note on this meeting). I pressed him a bit on whether this reflected her briefing from officials and/or political sources. He felt that this is a bit of a bee in her bonnet that she comes back to, and she hears (indirectly) from Unionists

who bang on about security co-operation - or the lack of it - flowing from the Agreement.

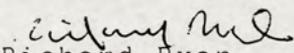
Boyd said that he received during his recent visit to the North the distinct feeling that co-operation between the police forces is very good and improving continually. He thought that much of what is buzzing around in her head may originate in fairly low level military (Army) assessments in border areas which find their way back to London and then infect the briefing material she receives. He said he is taking this problem up "under my wider intelligence responsibilities" and "I am encouraging as much as possible wide recognition that security co-operation is much improved and is improving."

3. He feels that, while there is no movement within the Unionist population toward an acceptance of the Agreement, nevertheless there is willy-nilly an emerging recognition that the Agreement is a fact and will not go away. While it will take a re-affirmation of this fact by the new British Government after the next election to bring it really home to them, he thinks that they are nevertheless well on the road to that necessary recognition.
4. He said that, if he were asked what is their (the British) attitude to the new Irish Government vis-a-vis the Agreement, he would say
 - they genuinely expect full (and pretty vigorous) implementation from the Irish Government;
 - they are ready for business as usual;
 - they hope that Tom King's invitation to Minister Lenihan to have a meal in London will enable an early meeting;
 - they expect officials to get on with the business of the Conference with a view to a meeting of it perhaps in April;
 - they envisage a meeting between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister in the first instance en marge of the European Council toward the end of the Belgian presidency in June;

.../

- (speaking for himself) that a June or October election in Britain (to be won, surely, by Mrs Thatcher) could lead to a focus on November or early December as a likely target date for an Anglo-Irish Summit.
5. He said that relations between the FCO and the NIO are getting better. There is of course, he said, a wide spectrum in the NIO as regards both quality and point of view on the Agreement. He is, however, concentrating on the quality material and he intends to pay attention to the problem of NIO "Home Office mentality". Above all, he said, he and Robert Armstrong see themselves as having a firm and direct overview rôle on the Agreement, and they intend that no-one in the NIO who matters will be left in any doubt about that. He spoke in very positive terms about Mark Elliott, who he thinks is cerebrally strong and of a cool and unflappable disposition, "just the right man in the right place".
6. Finally, Boyd said he had been briefed on our efforts to bring home to M.P.s at Westminster the reality of the Northern Ireland problem and the background to and purposes of the Agreement. He said he personally felt this to be a necessary and important part of the whole process although he personally would rather sup with the devil than some of the "Roy Bean-type" figures on the right wing of the Conservative Party!

Yours sincerely


Richard Ryan
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.