



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code:	2017/10/61
Creation Dates:	30 April 1987
Extent and medium:	2 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.

AMBAS. NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

CONFIDENTIAL

SPECIAL BAG

30 April 1987

Lunch with Andrew Neil, Editor, Sunday Times

Dear Dick

I have had reasonably regular contact with Neil since coming to London and he has come to dinner at home and receptions at the Embassy. He visited Ireland with political editor, Michael Jones, in 1977 and met, among others, with the Taoiseach who was then Leader of the Opposition.

Neil's direct knowledge of Ireland stems mostly from the 1970's when he was a political correspondent for the Economist in Belfast. Subsequently he worked in Washington for the Economist and began to specialize in DBS and cable television.

Neil seemed anxious to get back on a more equitable footing with us following the excesses of Cal McCrystal. For example, he pointed to last Sunday's Front Page coverage of Judge Gibson's murder as an example of how they had resisted strenuous RUC attempts on Saturday to avoid blame. Instead the story highlighted the version of events from the Irish Special Branch.

We discussed the progress of the Agreement at some length. Neil absolutely agreed that three judge courts had to be introduced into N.I. and he described Lord Hailsham as a reactionary. He did not see that the Gibson murder could sway the balance against reform. That murder reflected more on RUC procedures. He also thinks that Mrs Thatcher may decide to keep Tom King on as Secretary of State rather than risk a change at this stage. He agreed that the problem of job discrimination in N.I. would have to be more resolutely addressed by the British Government.

He enquired at some length about the new Irish Government, about cross border security cooperation and our views on devolution. We also discussed the March budget and the effect of the recovery, albeit a slow one, in the British economy. I repeated our criticism of Cal McCrystal's copy and he replied that he thought that McCrystal's bleak prose was motivated more by disappointment than by hostility. I suggested that it was distorted and could equally be applied to any part of Britain with the same results. Neil did not demur.

/...

17, GROSVENOR PLACE,
SW1X 7HR

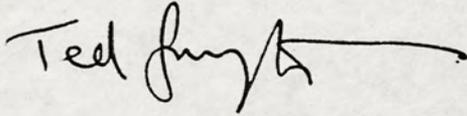
Telephone: 01-235 2171

TELEX: 916104

S22628
Quota
22628

There may be a further reason why Neil and the Murdoch empire might wish better relations with the Government. I understand some of Murdoch's people may be considering investing in the Irish DBS syndicate as well as in the IBA one. But such ideas are still at a very early stage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Smyth". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ted Smyth

Mr Richard O'Brien
Press Counsellor
Department of Foreign Affairs
St Stephens Green
Dublin 2