

CONFIDENTIALJ.  
DR OLIVER:

1. While socialising in Dublin over Easter I met Muiris Mac Conghail (Head of Government Information Services) who is an old friend. I gathered that Mr Cosgrave had not contemplated sending a message to the Convention, and you may take it that he will not now do so. They are very keen to be helpful to the Convention and would I think be prepared to say something if asked. If you wish to discuss this informally or any other general background aspect, MMcG and Dermot Nally will be glad to meet you discreetly at any time and at a suitable venue.
2. They are very proud of their performance in running the EEC Summit in Dublin recently. If you thought there was any advantage in looking at the mechanics of this operation (how papers were prepared and circulated, printing arrangements, press liaison etc) they would be happy to lay this on.
3. I gathered the Irish Government was very anxious that the Convention should succeed, even partially. They are very worried that the SDLP may not stay the course particularly in view of their poorish track record. They will keep a low profile with little public emphasis on an Irish Dimension (although this will not hold true for Fianna Fail.) Quite pleased with HW's speech (although they do not trust him and he is in particularly poor standing after his behaviour at the EEC Summit. General expectation is that Convention will fail - CCC'B. in particular takes a rather bleak view and is attempting to prepare public opinion for the political realities of that situation. Policing is seen as the main issue in the North, and some exasperation with SDLP for having by their doctrinaire approach to this issue left a void to be filled by Provo incident centres. Public opinion in South is said to be hardening against Provos - pleased with success of Gardai activity after the Portlaoise attempted gail break and during funeral. Government feels strong, and no particularly controversial local issue is coming up.

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M N HAYES

3 April 1975