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PREM 19/1287

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The ~~ation~~ in Northern Ireland

IRELAND

Force Levels

PE 1: MAY 1979

PE 17: JULY 1984

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
4.7.84		28.9.84					
9.7.84		2.10.84					
26.7.84		3.10.84					
28.7.84							
2.8.84		5.10.84					
3.8.84							
6.8.84		8.10.84					
14.8.84		9.10.84					
17.8.84		10.10.84					
20.8.84		15.10.84					
28.8.84		16.10.84					
31/8/84		20.10.84					
1.9.84		24.10.84					
3.9.84		25.10.84					
7.9.84		28.10.84					
11.9.84		2.11.84					
20.9.84		31/10/84					
24.9.84							
26.9.84							
		ENDS					

Published Papers

The following published paper(s) enclosed on this file have been removed and destroyed. Copies may be found elsewhere in The National Archives.

House of Commons: Twenty Fourth Report from the Committee of Public Accounts - Session 1983-84. MATTERS RELATING TO NORTHERN IRELAND. To be published as House of Commons paper 384 by HMSO

Signed

J. Gray

Date

23/12/2013

PREM Records Team

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
CONFIDENTIAL

(1) *ck*



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

C D Powell Esq
PS/Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

*Prime Minister
Agree that Douglas
Hurd should meet
Mr. Barry?
(It might be quite useful in
helping to scale down
Irish expectations of
the summit). CDP 57X.*

5th October 1984

Dear Charles,

*Meet
no*

MEETING WITH THE IRISH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr Hurd has not yet met Mr Barry, the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs. Both Mr Hurd and Mr Barry would welcome an early meeting although the earliest convenient date for both parties would be 25 October in Dublin. The purpose of the meeting would be for the two Ministers to get to know each other and to discuss political and security matters of common concern. The meeting would inevitably be seen, in part at least, as preparation for the Prime Minister's meeting with Dr FitzGerald in November, and could be used to discuss points which need to be developed before that meeting. As the Prime Minister will recall, Mr Prior met Mr Barry regularly.

I would be grateful if you would seek the Prime Minister's approval for Mr Hurd to meet Mr Barry on 25 October.

I am copying this letter to Len Appleyard and Richard Hatfield.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Sandiford

G K SANDIFORD

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

Q. J.K.

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP
Royal Courts of Justice
LONDON

5 October 1984

Dear Michael,

R v DOMINIC McGLINCHEY

I am grateful to you for setting out fully and clearly, in your minute of 24 September, the difficult considerations surrounding this case. I need not comment at any length, since we are at one about the difficulties which it may cause, and about the action which should be taken to limit the great damage which could result.

As you make plain, this may arise if McGlinchey is not convicted on the charges which he is now facing. I suppose that this is more likely following the failure of the independent witnesses in the case to come up to the mark, even though the Magistrate felt able to commit the case for trial. Assuming an acquittal, and a challenge from McGlinchey to the order for his return to the Republic, we must be prepared from the beginning to make the most of our arguments in favour of return. I take it that McGlinchey's case would technically be against the Chief Constable, since the RUC would have brought in the warrant from the Garda Siochana calling for his return. But since the issues may eventually go to the House of Lords, we shall want to be sure that they are handled properly right from the start, and would not necessarily want them left in the lower courts to the attentions of a lawyer appointed by the Police Authority. You might like to consider how to ensure, before the matter arises, that Counsel is properly briefed in Northern Ireland, for the hearings in the lower courts, on the arguments that will be put forward if necessary in the House of Lords.

The Prime Minister has suggested that she may need to warn the Taoiseach of what may happen at some later stage. Although the case may not come on until the New Year, we ought to provide for this at the Summit meeting planned for November. Since the Irish already feel that the case has been a long time coming to Court, Dr FitzGerald may raise it himself anyway. Perhaps our officials could consult about the terms of a brief before the meeting.

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I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

Comer,

Douglin.

CONFIDENTIAL

IRELAND: Situation Pt 17



L-8 OCT 1984

SECRET



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 October, 1984

Dear Charles,

NAPT

CDD 57x.

Capture of PIRA Shipment by the Irish Navy

My letter of 1 October proposing a Prime Ministerial message to Dr FitzGerald was I fear in one respect inaccurate: it was misleading in that it repeated inaccurate press reports stating that the United States authorities were involved in this action.

I am writing now to say that we have since been told by the Security Services that the Americans were not involved at any stage, and indeed are rather annoyed at the press speculation that they were. You may wish to correct your files on this point.

I am copying this to Graham Sandiford (NIO).

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

SECRET

SUBJECT
C. Master

SECRET AND PERSONAL



VC
file 28

10 DOWNING STREET

5 October 1984

From the Private Secretary

Dear Graham,

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister held a meeting this morning with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to consider the handling of further talks with the Irish Government on Northern Ireland in the period before the Anglo-Irish Summit in mid-November. Sir Robert Armstrong, Mr. Robert Andrew, Mr. David Goodall and Mr. Bryan Cartledge were also present.

The Prime Minister said that she was worried that the Irish Government were trying to push the talks along too fast, and had unrealistic expectations from the Anglo-Irish Summit. She recognised that considerable progress had been made in reducing their earlier expectations of joint sovereignty or joint authority. But the more successful we were in scaling down Irish hopes, the greater pressure we should come under at the Summit to reach some agreement. She did not think that enough work had yet been done, in particular on the scope of the consultation which we were offering the Irish Republic on Northern Ireland affairs or on what would have to be offered to the Unionists to persuade them to accept an Irish dimension. The Prime Minister recalled that the Communique issued following her last visit to Dublin had aroused strong suspicions on the part of the Unionists. They would be very wary this time. Nothing at all had been said to them yet about the current talks. If they found out without proper preparation, before or as a result of the Summit, the whole exercise could backfire and lead to increased violence in the Province.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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The Northern Ireland Secretary said that it must be right to keep the negotiations afloat. But we had to avoid a situation in which we exchanged alienation of the Catholic minority for alienation of the Protestant majority. He believed that a workable scheme could be devised to allow the Irish Government a consultative role in Northern Ireland affairs. It was much less certain that the Irish Government could deliver changes in the Irish Constitution. In any case the Unionists would not regard that as an adequate quid pro quo for accepting the Irish dimension. They would say that the Republic's claim to Northern Ireland had never been more than an aspiration, and there was no need for the North to pay a price to see it renounced. It was necessary to consider what more could be offered to the Unionists. A lot of further work was needed on this. He also agreed on the need to talk to the Unionists before the discussions with the Irish Government progressed much further.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that Mr. Barry had made clear to him that the Irish Government would find it hard to continue the present co-operation unless there was also progress in the talks. If there were to be no evidence of progress within a reasonable time on the issues raised in the Irish Forum Report, Dr. FitzGerald's Government would draw increasingly heavy nationalist criticism. He thought that Mr. Barry that the understood role which could be offered to the Republic in Northern Ireland affairs would be modest. He agreed with the Northern Ireland Secretary on the need to offer offsetting gains to the Unionists. These should be in the direction of greater devolution of local government powers.

In discussion of what would need to be offered to the Unionists, it was suggested that they would be most attracted by restoration of local authority powers. Districts might be delimited so that Catholics would have majorities in some of them. It was pointed out however that

this might lead to Sinn Fein majorities in some districts. The Unionists would see it as in effect handing over a third of the Province to the Republic. The better course would be to devolve local rule for the Province as a whole, with safeguards for the minority.

A close link was recognised to exist between the powers to be devolved and the degree of consultation offered to the Republic. It was suggested that a clear distinction should be drawn between powers (defence, foreign policy, finance) which would remain with HMG; powers devolved to the local government which would not be subject to consultation with the Republic; and powers exercised by the Northern Ireland Secretary (for instance law and order in the Province) where the Irish Government would have a right to be consulted. A problem would clearly exist in that the matters on which the minority in Northern Ireland would look to the Republic for protection would extend beyond the powers reserved to the Secretary of State. Moreover, the Irish Government would not be interested in consultation limited only to security matters. This would expose them to charges by Mr. Haughey that they were just joining the British in propping up colonial rule. They would want there to be a political dimension and consultation would have to cover, for instance, appointments to public authorities. It was agreed that there should be scope for some widening of the areas where consultation would take place to cover, for instance, housing. But it was also recognised that it would not be possible to govern the Province effectively if it was necessary to consult with the Irish Government on every detail in areas where the Secretary of State exercised direct powers.

The Northern Ireland Secretary said that he was due shortly to have a further round of discussions with political leaders in the north. He thought it essential to be able to go over with them some of the ground being

BF/

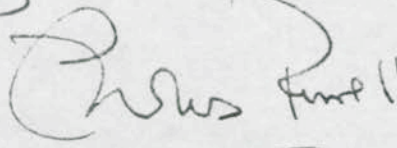
discussed with the Irish Government. He also thought it important to be able to take a number of Northern Ireland Ministers, civil servants, and the Commissioner into his confidence. He would clearly have to be very careful in what he said to them. He would let the Prime Minister have a note of what he proposed to say. It was agreed that these contacts would not take place until after the next round of consultation with the Irish Government on 15/16 October.

BF/

The Prime Minister stressed that any statement of objectives to be agreed at the Anglo/Irish Summit would have to be in very general terms only. It should be borne in mind that she would have to make a statement to Parliament on her return. It was agreed that Sir Robert Armstrong would submit a draft in due course.

The Prime Minister concluded that Sir Robert Armstrong should be guided by the points made in discussion in his further contacts with the Irish Government and should discourage them from expecting too much from the Summit.

I am sending copies of this letter to Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Antony Acland, Mr Robert Andrew, Mr David Goodall, Sir Philip Woodfield and Mr Bryan Cartledge.

Yours sincerely,


Charles Powell

Graham Sandiford, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

CDP 5/x. 27

~~PRIME MINISTER~~

MEETING OF MINISTERS: 5 OCTOBER
ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The purpose is to agree instructions for Robert Armstrong on the handling of further talks with the Irish Government on Northern Ireland in the run-up to the Anglo-Irish Summit in mid-November.

You commented on Robert Armstrong's account of the last round: "They are trying to go too fast. In view of my last visit to Dublin, the unionists will be particularly suspicious of this one." You added that the Anglo-Irish Summit in mid-November would be "too soon" for a full report to Ministers.

Robert Armstrong has now explained in more detail (please see attached note) what he regards as a feasible goal for the Summit. In essence, it is a report to the Summit of the outline of a possible package with Ministers being asked, not to agree it, but only whether it is sufficiently on the right lines to justify further work.

Questions which you might put to the meeting are:

- (i) Is the objective for the Summit set out in Robert Armstrong's minute of 3 October feasible?
Or does it still go too far too fast?
- (ii) What will be the Unionist reaction to the general statement of objectives proposed for the Summit?
Is there something which can be offered to them at the same time?

- (iii) Is it really feasible, as the Taoiseach wants, to have a package agreed and in being before the Northern Ireland local elections next May? *No*
- (iv) If it is decided that work needs to be slowed down, how is this to be presented to the Irish Government without leading it to lose interest altogether?
- (v) Are Ministers content with the emerging shape of the package as it appears from Robert Armstrong's minute of 24 September, also enclosed?

A decision is also needed on whether you will go to Ireland for the Summit. Your comment above suggests that you are resigned to this! The Irish are now suggesting Ashford Castle where President Reagan stayed.

CDP

4 October 1984

Ref. A084/2623

MR POWELL

The Commission is Prime Minister 2/6
initial. It was that which CDP
I am so much to with last time. 4/x
In my view it must be in very general terms only.
Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

Thank you for your minute of 26 September.

2. I very much doubt whether, at the next Anglo-Irish Summit, the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach will be taking definitive decisions on a possible package. I do not see how my discussions with Mr Nally can get as far as that in the time available. Moreover, I am sure that it would be counter-productive if a fully-fledged package emerged directly from the Summit: the fact that it had done so would be damaging to any chance it might have of acceptance in Northern Ireland.

3. As I see it, the farthest we are likely to get by the time of the Summit is to be able to report to the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach on the outlines of a possible package. The decision which Ministers will be asked to take is whether such a package has sufficient prospects of being, or being made to be, acceptable in this country, in Northern Ireland and in the Republic, for further detailed work to be done on it.

4. If the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach decide that the package, or something on its lines, has a future, they will then have to consider the timetable. The Taoiseach will be acutely aware of the need, as he sees it, to have something publicly in being and agreed before the local elections in Northern Ireland next May, if further alienation of the minority community and further political progress of Sinn Fein are to be avoided. The timetable will have to allow for completion of detailed work, and then for a process of "selling" the resulting package to the various parties concerned. It will also be necessary to consider what other elements there will need to be alongside the Anglo-Irish package: for instance, would it be sensible to make proposals for further devolution in Northern Ireland at the same time as the package (paragraph 7 of my minute of 24 September (A084/2367 refers to this); and we are now on notice from the Irish Government that

Not possible

3



they believe that it would be important to have a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland as part of any new arrangements: this has been proposed by the Official Unionist Party and by the Democratic Unionist Party as well as by the SDLP in Northern Ireland.

5. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach will also need to decide what should be said publicly directly after the Summit. If they agree that the package should be pursued, it may be possible to reach agreement on a very general statement of objectives which could be issued as a communique from the Summit and which would be as it were the framework for the subsequent package. If they decide that there is no possibility of progress on the basis of the package, the communique will have to be confined to some very general remarks on the subject of Northern Ireland. But that would be regarded by the Taoiseach as a failure.

6. I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to Sir Antony Acland, Mr Robert Andrew, Mr David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

3 October 1984

SECRET



MFJAFG

25

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

You sent me with your minute of 2 October a copy of a letter from the Director General of the Security Service about the part played by the Security Service and the Royal Air Force in the recent interception by the Irish Navy of an arms shipment for the Provisional IRA.

The Prime Minister would be very grateful if you would convey to those concerned her congratulations upon the success. In her own words it is "marvellous work".

Charles Powell

3 October 1984

SECRET>

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1287</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract/Item details: <i>Armstrong to Powell dated 2 October 1984 & attachment</i>	
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File B

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 October 1984

CAPTURE OF PIRA SHIPMENT BY THE IRISH NAVY

Thank you for your letter of 1 October proposing that the Prime Minister send a message of congratulations to Dr. FitzGerald following the Irish Navy's capture of a PIRA arms shipment.

BH
The Prime Minister agrees to send the message enclosed with your letter. I should be grateful if the text could be telegraphed to Dublin for delivery.

I am copying this letter to Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office).

CHARLES POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CST

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL
From THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NBPM
AT 4/10
CC 1/10



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

A Turnbull Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

1st October 1984

Dear Andrew,

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Secretary of State is aware that the Prime Minister is interested in the level of financial support which Northern Ireland receives from the rest of the United Kingdom and has asked me to write to you about it.

Support in 1983-84 amounted to some £1,306m. This excludes the extra cost of the Army's task in Northern Ireland which amounted to a further £141m. The total of £1,447m is equivalent to 38% of the total Northern Ireland Public Expenditure Block (including Law and Order services).

The actual level of support has been the subject of some local political controversy in Northern Ireland. Many Unionists are quick to point out that other parts of the United Kingdom also receive support. It is Northern Ireland's unique accounting arrangements which makes it possible to identify the level of subvention to the Province in a way which is not possible for other regions.

A copy of this letter goes for information to John Gieve at the Chief Secretary's Office.

*Yours Sincerely
Neil Ward.*

N D WARD

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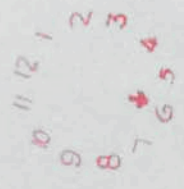
with me

W. Ireland

W.A.H.



1 OCT 1984



CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 October, 1984

Prime Minister:

Agree to this message?

Dr

1/60

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Dear Charles,

Yes, pls

Capture of Pira Shipment by the Irish Navy

The Foreign Secretary has suggested that the Prime Minister might wish to send a message of congratulations to Dr FitzGerald following the successful capture by the Irish Navy last Saturday morning of seven tonnes of arms, ammunition, explosives, and military equipment which was being sent to the PIRA in the trawler 'Marita Anne' by sympathisers in the United States. Sir Geoffrey has already congratulated the Irish Foreign Minister. The Northern Ireland Secretary is being recommended to do the same with Mr Norman, the Irish Minister of Justice. I submit a draft message for the Prime Minister's approval.

The five men arrested on the trawler have been charged in Dublin with the unlawful possession of explosives and of having firearms and ammunition with intent to endanger life. The size of the shipment exceeds that captured at the last intervention of this kind in 1973 when the coaster 'Claudia' was caught with a cargo of Libyan arms.

This capture is a badly needed boost to the morale of the Irish security forces whose muddled attempts earlier this year to capture the terrorist kidnappers of Don Tidey were less than reassuring. It will also enable the Irish Government to counter criticism from those in the North who doubt Irish determination to fight the PIRA. In his public reaction to the capture the Taoiseach said that the arms were being imported 'to murder Irish people North and South'. He did not miss the opportunity to address those who had financed the shipment. He said that 'There are still people in the United States who, failing to comprehend the situation in this country, are willing to send arms to murder Irish people, including our police and armed forces'. Noraid have denied all knowledge of this shipment.

I am copying this letter to Graham Sandiford in the Northern Ireland Office.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

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DSR 11 (Revised)

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM

Reference

Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Dr Garret FitzGerald

Copies to:

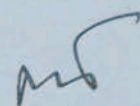
PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

Please convey my congratulations to the Irish Security Forces on the success of their operation against PIRA gun runners last Saturday morning. It is heartening to know that seven tonnes of arms have been denied to the terrorists.



Enclosures—flag(s).....

1 OCT 1984

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CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

Pl- destroy
enclosure
CO. 2/x



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 October 1984

Dear Charles,

Northern Ireland

Thank you for your letter of 25 September enclosing Mr Prior's valedictory note on this subject. The Foreign Secretary has read it with considerable interest. I now return the copy you sent me.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 October 1984

Doc. 6/10

MR. BARRY'S SPEECH TO THE BRITISH IRISH ASSOCIATION
15 SEPTEMBER

Thank you for your letter of 26 September enclosing a copy of Mr. Barry's speech to the annual conference of the British Irish Association.

The Prime Minister has read this with great interest.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely
Chris Powell

(C.D. POWELL)

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 September, 1984

MAGILLIGAN HUNGER STRIKE

Thank you for your letter of 27 September about the present position on the Loyalist Hunger Strike at HMP Magilligan.

The Prime Minister agrees with your Secretary of State that it is important for the future not to allow the hunger strike to succeed, and has asked me to underline that we do not give in to hunger strikers.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office), Colin Budd (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Henry Steel (Attorney General's Office) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(C.D. Powell)

G. Sandiford, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

COL



10 DOWNING STREET

Mtg. of Min's (w. Ireland) 9.30 (5.10.74)

Sir Philip Woodfield cannot
attend he has a long
standing engagement.

Is this OK?

Yes
OK.

Mark
28/9

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1287</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract/Item details: <i>Telegram No 241 dated 28 September 1984</i>	
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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

22

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

Prime Minister

COPIED 2/8/84

Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

27 September 1984

Dear Prime Minister,

ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

I read with interest Sir Robert Armstrong's report of his meeting with Mr Nally on 19 September and have noted your own response to it.

I am sure that it is right to proceed carefully in this difficult area and I look forward to discussing the subject on 5 October.

I am copying this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,

Douglas

D.H.

mt

SECRET
PERSONAL

2



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

C D Powell Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

*We do not
give in to hunger strikes
Please indicate to
H NIO.*

*Prime Minister
ESP
27/9*

27 September 1984

Dear Charles,

MAGILLIGAN HUNGER STRIKE

I am writing to let you know the present position on the Loyalist hunger strike at HMP Magilligan.

2. The strike has so far involved 10 Loyalist paramilitary prisoners. It started with 2 prisoners on 20 August and the others have joined at weekly intervals since. The strike was suspended on 18 September: resumed at the weekend and suspended again on 25 September. The action is said to result from fears by Loyalist prisoners that they are at risk of attack by Republicans. There have been some 29 minor incidents in the last year but 13 of these have been attacks or threats by Loyalist prisoners on Republicans. We have no doubt that the real objective of the hunger strike, and of the paramilitary organisations on both sides of the divide, is to put pressure on the authorities to concede the separation of Loyalists from Republicans (and the separation of both from those whom the two factions regard as "ordinary" prisoners) so that the paramilitary groupings can seek to exercise control in their respective wings. The question is thus basically not one of the safety of prisoners but of authority in the prisons.

3. We face two difficulties in holding out against segregation at Magilligan. First, there are real problems for the prison Governors in integrating different groups if, after paramilitary intimidation, they are determined not to mix. Secondly, we have a situation at Maze (Cellular) prison, arising from the history of Republican and Loyalist protests there since 1976, in which there is de facto segregation. While we have succeeded in increasing the number of integrated wings, 15 are still wholly Republican and 5 wholly Loyalist. We do not regard the Maze position as satisfactory, and you will recall a minute from Mr Prior in April expressing his concern about it. The situation is being kept under review.

4. If the strike is resumed and there is a death, there could be grave public order implications - especially in the Loyalist community. The Chief Constable takes this risk seriously. The atmosphere would be wrong for any attempt at political progress.

5. With a view to breaking the impasse, Mr Scott has had discussions with Peter Robinson MP and John Carson, a former Westminster MP and now an OUP Assembly Member, who in turn have

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had a number of meetings with the hunger strikers. These have been helpful in ensuring the Government's position is understood, but we have been careful in our dealings with Mr Robinson and Mr Carson to make it clear that there is no question of our conducting negotiations with hunger strikers.

6. We have said in discussions that if the hunger strike ends we shall be prepared to consider redressing the balance in those wings at Magilligan where Loyalists are at present outnumbered by Republicans, and we will review the existing arrangements in order to consider whether there are any further practicable and reasonable steps to minimise the risk of prisoners being attacked or intimidated. Throughout the discussions, however, we have made it clear that we do not see a segregated system as the answer to any anxieties about safety.

7. Over the weekend we moved 4 of the ex-hunger strikers (the 4 who joined the protest last) back into the prison with three carefully-chosen Roman Catholic prisoners; so that the prisoners could not claim we had left them in de facto segregation or had not given proper attention to their safety. Not unexpectedly, this led to a brief resumption of the fast of all 10 ex-hunger strikers (all of whom had made substantial weight gains since last Tuesday). Acting on medical advice, the Governor then moved the 4 back to their original location near the prison hospital for medical supervision. (The other 6 were still in the prison hospital). This resulted in them all eating again - a "controlled" intake of food according to the prisoners - to maintain but not improve their condition.

8. The prisoners say that we have until early next week to produce a satisfactory response. Mr Scott issued a statement yesterday making it clear that safety measures will be reviewed but, in the Government's view, segregation would play into the hands of the paramilitaries. This may lead to a resumption of the hunger strike with all the problems that that will cause both inside and outside the prison. Dr Paisley and Mr Robinson have asked to see the Secretary of State, and this meeting will be held this afternoon.

9. The Secretary of State takes seriously the warning of the Chief Constable about possible disorder if this hunger strike were to resume and continue to the point of death. On the other hand, it seems to him important for the future not to allow the hunger strike to succeed, and also important not to take a small but dangerous step towards increasing the power of the paramilitaries in the prisons. He will continue to keep the Prime Minister informed as the situation develops.

10. I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President of the Council, the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Attorney General and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Sandiford.

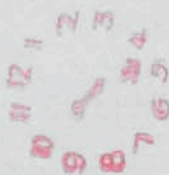
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

✓ CEPC ④
Prime Minister
CDP
26/9.

26 September 1984

Dear Charles,

Mr Barry's Speech to the British Irish Association,
15 September

The Secretary of State has asked me to draw the Prime Minister's attention to Mr Barry's speech to the annual conference of the British Irish Association in Cambridge on 15 September.

The speech attracted much publicity in the Irish press. It was carefully drafted and clearly designed to raise expectations of a joint initiative by the two governments in relation to Northern Ireland - with the aim of thereby putting pressure on HMG to make a more detailed response to the Forum Report than that given by Mr Prior to the House on 2 July, and to embark on substantive negotiations with the Irish Government.

Mr Barry nevertheless welcomed Mr Prior's statement to the House, and was encouraged that Mr Hurd was to take it as his starting point (p2). He repeated that Chapter 5 was the key section of the Forum Report, together with its claim to be open to other ideas. He made a number of sharp points, but the overall impression conveyed was one of optimism about the prospects for significant improvement in the situation in the next year. The core of his message was that security measures on their own would not be enough to restore peace and stability: London and Dublin should jointly seek a political solution now. This was underlined by the statement on p10 of the speech that "... the problem of Northern Ireland (must) be given the highest priority for a sustained period both by you and us".

/ The speech

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

On Ireland
Situation: FT



The speech also contains at least two significant hints at the elements which the Irish Government would like any joint initiative to cover: Mr Prior's alleged acceptance in a press interview in July "of the right of the Irish Government to speak on behalf of the Northern nationalists" (p4), and the declaration that "we honestly cannot foresee any real improvement without a major transformation of the system of public authority in Northern Ireland" (p6). The significance of these passages will certainly not have escaped close observers of the Irish political scene, particularly when read in conjunction with Sir Nicholas Henderson's interview with Mr Prior in the last instalment of Mary Holland's televised series "The Shadow of the Gun" (broadcast on 16 September), in which Mr Prior was drawn into some speculative comment about the possibility of joint security and consultative arrangements in the Province.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours ever,
Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

"Anglo-Irish Relations - The Crossroads Ahead"

Remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Peter Barry TD,
at the British Irish Association Conference

Jesus College, Cambridge - 15 September 1984

Embargo: 9.00 p.m., 15 September 1984

The Irish and British Governments and peoples are now close to our most important crossroads for many years. One way or the other, our relations are about to be transformed. When your Association meets this time next year, you will be considering a new and different situation, either one in which progress has been made and continues to be made, or a situation palpably more bitter, more difficult, more unstable and more dangerous than anything we have had to face in Anglo-Irish relations in this generation.

Ranged against the possibility of progress is a daunting array of negative forces: the intense concentration in one corner of one island of the most intractable aspects of the long and difficult involvement of the two islands with one another; the fanatical determination of two sets of armed extremists to secure for themselves and for the communities for which they falsely claim to speak total victory, total supremacy; the fears and divisions among the people of Northern Ireland; and, above all, the ever-widening gap between Northern nationalists and the institutions of the state: in other words the ever-deepening alienation from the existing system of order and authority of an entire community. Other major obstacles to progress are: complacency or weary disinterest on the part of some people here in this island or, even in the case of some of those who are well-intentioned, the failure to face up to our common problems in their full dimension and thus the unwillingness to contemplate action of a sufficiently fundamental character to secure real and enduring progress.

For my part, I am hopeful that we will make such progress. I am hopeful that when you come to your deliberations in this Conference next year, you will be facing a new and, if I may say so, almost unrecognizably positive situation in Anglo-Irish relations. Because I recently expressed some optimism along these lines I was accused by one journalist of being naive and, by another, of being hysterical. So mired in despair are the assumptions of so many about our problems!

There are, however, a number of strong, new, positive factors in the situation, factors which together could well overcome even the most awesome of the obstacles that face us.

Foremost of all, is the clear recognition by the two Governments that the situation in Northern Ireland, and particularly the alienation of the minority, is so threatening to stability that action is vitally necessary to reverse the deterioration. Mr Prior made an important contribution to Anglo-Irish understanding in his speech in the Commons on the Report of the New Ireland Forum on the 2nd July when he said that a situation had been reached where it would be worse to do nothing than to take action. Mr Prior went on to acknowledge all the major ingredients of the problem of alienation in terms with which we would strongly agree. That speech was insufficiently appreciated by the media and by some political commentators. I was encouraged to read that Mr Hurd takes it as the point of departure for his own approach.

The second powerful positive factor is the Forum Report. Irish nationalism has with one voice described what we see as the unalterable realities of the situation including those realities, notably the unionist realities, which are frankly uncongenial to us. With one voice we have set out the irreducible requirements, as we believe them to be, which must be met if peace and stability are to be won. I want to emphasise here my view and that of my Government that these realities and requirements in Chapter 5 are the real core of the Report. In stating them we have not flinched from the uncongenial: we have accepted that Irish unity could come only by agreement and consent - and that means the consent of the people of the North as well as the consent of the people of the South. We went on to set out a number of possible options which might accommodate both the Realities and the Requirements of our Report, including what we naturally refer to as the preference of Irish nationalism, the unitary state. Finally, we have emphasised that we do not have closed minds: we remain open to any ideas which might lead to progress.

It took us a long time to write and agree the Report, in fact over a year. British people and Unionists should bear in mind that this was no easy task. A fairly recent generation of Irish nationalists, my political forebears and those of Garret FitzGerald and Charles Haughey, fought a horrific civil war about some of the very issues on which agreement was secured in the Forum Report. I believe all who participated in the Forum deserve credit but I believe particular credit for this remarkable achievement is due to the two Labour parties in Ireland, Dick Spring's Irish Labour Party and John Hume's SDLP.

What is even more important is that we have in the only prescriptive section of the Report, the Realities and the Requirements, set out a new nationalist agenda which is to a remarkable degree realistic, generous and flexible. Irish nationalism has now earned the right to say to the British and to the Unionists: "We have tried hard and honestly to take account of your interests and your rights. These Realities and these Requirements are our conclusions. Do you agree with them? If so, let us implement them. If not, tell us where we are wrong and let us together establish a set of conclusions which will take account of the full dimensions of this problem, as you and we see it. And let us implement those conclusions for the sake of peace and stability."

A third important positive factor is that the British Government are, I believe, trying in their own consideration of the Forum Report to take a fresh and, I hope, courageous look at this problem. The first clear signs of this were in Mr Prior's significant speech to which I have referred and, in particular, in his acceptance, shortly afterwards confirmed in an interview in the Belfast Irish News, of the right of the Irish Government to speak on behalf of the Northern nationalists.

A fourth positive factor is the fact that many Unionists too are thinking in more positive terms. I have several times welcomed the document adopted as a policy statement by the Official Unionist Party, "The Way Forward". The tone of this

document and some of its ideas - most notably those in the area of human rights - are encouraging. I have also said that it is our view that the political proposals in the document would be inadequate to reverse the problem of alienation, but I have also noted a positive openness to discussion and negotiation.

A fifth and very important factor is that we have in London, and, I believe, in Dublin, two solid Governments who will together have the time to establish a new attempt to bring peace and stability to Northern Ireland and to sustain that effort through its critical first years.

These then are the grounds for my optimism which I hope will not prove to have been either "too naive" or "too hysterical". I should say that the criticism with which I am more familiar is that I am too downright and too plain spoken! Perhaps I am. As one who does not agree with every word in every editorial about Ireland in the Daily Telegraph or indeed in some other British newspapers, I have to admit that I was favourably struck by a leader in the Telegraph written some months ago. It was written by someone whom, of course, I cannot name, but whose identity many of you, I would wager, could guess correctly. In effect, the writer advised Mrs Thatcher that, in any talk there might be about a fresh initiative, she should be brutally frank with the Irish. I do not know about the brutal bit, but personally I think that frankness is very desirable. There has not been enough frankness in Anglo-Irish relations.

At the risk of getting into trouble yet again, I hope therefore that you might allow me to conclude my remarks this evening with a few frank words.

First, to the Unionists among us. I must ask you to believe that the overwhelming majority of the people of our State feel for your suffering. We share the outrage of Ken Maginnis at the genocidal slaughter by the IRA of your people in the border areas. While we believe that major features of the security system in the North are structurally wrong, we acknowledge that that is not your fault nor indeed the fault of those in the security services. We know that every attack on police men and women and on soldiers is felt by you to be an attack on your community. We do what we can, at enormously higher cost to our people than the security system in the North is to the people of Britain, to try to help. But we honestly cannot foresee any real improvement without a major transformation of the system of public authority in Northern Ireland.

What we want to do is to help solve the problem in a way which will protect all the people of the North so that you and we in the South will start to enjoy a sense of security such as neither side in the North has ever felt. We believe that there are deep and worsening structural problems in the systems of government, politics, justice and security in Northern Ireland and that they can be crudely summed up by saying that nationalists feel that those systems do not belong to them in anything like the way that you feel that they belong to you.

In fact, "alienation" means that nationalists increasingly feel that those systems are not "theirs" in any sense whatever. I'm afraid it's no good saying, with whatever degree of sincere conviction or even outrage, that nationalists should feel otherwise. That would be like my saying that you should become nationalists. You can't and won't and nationalists in Ireland for the first time have with one voice in the Forum Report acknowledged that you feel, and have a right to feel yourselves to be British, and that you have and have a right to have, a specific set of values which you believe to be threatened. I have myself in various ways, including through the educational experience of the Forum, tried to learn about your point of view. I think I have learned a lot. I know that I have a lot still to learn. I want to continue doing so and I hope that you will help me to. Do you think it is unreasonable of me to ask you to try to understand positively the point of view of nationalists? If so, there is not much hope for any of us. If not, we all have a great deal to hope for.

I know that many of you resent the fact that I publicly raise issues which are of concern to Northern nationalists: visits to Drumadd, border incidents, plastic bullets, shootings by the security forces, remarks of judges and so on. I think I have some understanding of your reaction. But I would like to say that, quite apart from the fact that the British Government now accept the legitimacy of my Government raising these and other issues, and quite apart from my own conviction that we have a moral duty to do so, I believe that it is in the interest of

all the people of Northern Ireland that they be raised by Dublin. Any failure on my part to do so would by default legitimise the spurious pretensions of the Provisional IRA and their political henchmen who are as much my enemies as they are yours. That in the last analysis is the most fundamental thing I would ask you to accept. Let me repeat it. The IRA are my enemy just as they are yours. I want no part of the Ireland they want to bring about or the methods they use to achieve it. You who are Unionist and we who are nationalist must find a way together to ensure that neither the IRA nor the armed extremists on your side who employ similar methods will prevail. That means in the first instance finding urgently a way to end the alienation of the nationalist community in Northern Ireland on which the IRA are now feeding successfully.

Surely you must see this? The vast majority of us, North and South, want to see peace and stability at last on the island we all share. But security measures alone will not achieve this so long as there is a substantial population - the nationalists of Northern Ireland - who feel that they have been given no reason to identify with the political institutions under which they must live.

I turn now to my British friends and colleagues here. You cannot really detach yourselves and say that the crisis in Northern Ireland is the fault of its people - unionists or nationalists - and leave it at that. In face of the scale of misery and the dying of the hopes of a whole community, you in Britain simply cannot evade the fact that both in history and

today you have been and are, the governing power. One is saddened, even embarrassed, to hear intelligent British leaders blame the problem on the irrational confusion of the Catholic and Protestant Irish. Do not be surprised if we in Ireland are angered when we see this reflected in racist jibes or jokes on British television and in British tabloids. God knows both nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland and, let me say it, we in the South, all contributed our share to the tragedy of today. But Northern Ireland itself was primarily a British creation; and it is today a British responsibility. Every evasion of that fact increases the problem.

We the nationalists have tried to face our obligation through the Forum Report. Of the three main protagonists, we have made the first major move to point at least to a way out of our common dilemma. I know that it will be difficult for Unionists to make a comparable move, beleaguered as they feel themselves to be and protected as they have hitherto been by the structure of their situation, although I do not exclude that some of them may have begun to do so. But we now await the most important move by you in Britain and your Government. I must confess that just as you were impatient with our delay in producing the Forum Report, we feel a certain impatience about your deliberations. We are, as I said, quite close to that crossroads.

The problem, stated simply, should not be beyond the ingenuity of any of us. It is that London and Dublin should together provide to the people of Northern Ireland what they need, not

what we in either capital might merely prefer for ourselves. What they need, we say in the Forum Report, is that, where now only one tradition - only one identity - is accommodated, a set of structures must be established which accommodate on an equal basis the two clashing traditions and identities. That must be done in a way which all the people can experience in their daily lives. It will require that the problem of Northern Ireland be given the highest priority for a sustained period both by you and by us. Among our criteria for a solution would be that the solution be durable, transparent - that is, that there be no hidden agendas to be the focus of fear or suspicions - and that it be adequate to reverse alienation and create peace and stability for the very first time in Northern Ireland. To attempt anything short of that would be to make matters worse. We, the nationalists of Ireland, know and admire you, the people of this island, in a way which, for reasons of history, population size and media power, is not always fully reciprocated. We believe more in your capacity to solve this problem than you may do yourselves. We believe you should commit yourselves to this task now for the sake of all the people of Northern Ireland.

A final word about my own Government's role. We will be motivated in the months ahead by one sole objective: to end the suffering and misery of ordinary men, women and children. We will not be put off by meaningless ideological bombast which might be aimed at temporary political advantage at the expense

of the security and the happiness of living people. The tragedy of Northern Ireland is finally a human, more than a political, tragedy and, for myself, it would be the greatest privilege of my public life to be allowed to play a part in ending it.

Ireland: Situation P417.

Bre



cc PC

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister has read with interest your minute of 24 September reporting on your latest round of talks with Mr. Nally in Dublin. She is worried, however, that the pace of these talks is being forced too hard. Against the background of her last visit to Dublin, the Unionists will be particularly suspicious of this one. She thinks therefore that the Anglo-Irish Summit in mid November is too soon to have to confront a package on which decisions would be expected.

The Prime Minister would like an early discussion of the future handling of these talks. We shall try to find a date next week.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to Sir Antony Acland, Mr. Robert Andrew, Mr. David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield.

(C.D. POWELL)

26 September 1984

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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File with DP 25/9.

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 September, 1984

R -v- DOMINIC McGLINCHEY

The Prime Minister has noted the Attorney General's minute to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of 24 September.

The Prime Minister thinks that she may, at some later stage, need to warn Dr. FitzGerald of what may happen. I should be grateful if this point could be borne in mind.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Stoate (Lord Chancellor's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office), Colin Budd (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office).

(C.D. Powell)

H. Steel, Esq., CMG OBE
Attorney General's Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

Secretary of State



10 DOWNING STREET

No copies made.

CRBudd

26/9

From the Private Secretary

25 September 1984

Dear Colin,

NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. Prior recently sent the Prime Minister a valedictory note on Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister asked him whether she could circulate it to a few close colleagues on a strictly personal basis. He has agreed to this. I enclose a copy.

The Prime Minister expressly does not wish it to be given a wide distribution but treated for the personal information of Ministers concerned and of Sir Robert Armstrong only.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Hugh Taylor (Home Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,
Charles Powell

CHARLES POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

Prime Minister

1. Having relinquished my post in Northern Ireland I thought that you and Douglas Hurd might find it helpful if I were to set out the current position as I see it, and to indicate where progress might be made. While an unsuccessful and over-ambitious attempt to move things forward could destroy the greater stability which has developed in the Province in recent years, I am convinced that things cannot be left as they are. On a number of fronts matters are moving in our favour but the long-term prognosis is not good. The following factors are of relevance:

- i) The Government in the Republic: the present coalition Government wishes to make progress in Northern Ireland on a basis which falls short of a united or federal Ireland. Their present bidding is far too high but an agreement may prove possible both because ^{of} Dr. FitzGerald's personal commitment to exorcising the constitutional issue and because of their fear of the impact of Sinn Fein in the South. The return to power of Mr. Haughey could only be inimical to constructive developments in Northern Ireland and could well handicap co-operation on security matters.
- ii) The security situation: the number of deaths so far this year is a little higher than for the same period in 1983. The level of violence has, in general, been ratched down to its lowest level for 15 years - although the situation in some border areas remains tense. The line can be held, probably indefinitely, but I must caution you that in the absence of measures to reduce the alienation from authority of many in the nationalist community the potential for deterioration, and considerably increased casualties in the security forces, is much greater than for an improvement. I should also say that I do not believe that a political breakthrough could, of itself, end the violence. In the short-term it could make it worse. Although it would reduce violence thereafter, the para-militaries are now so deeply involved with organised crime that it is difficult to see a complete and early return to normality.

- iii) the economy: there has been a less strong recovery than in the rest of the United Kingdom. Despite good performances by Harland and Wolff and Shorts it amounts to little more than a deceleration in the rate of economic decline. Given the large number of young people coming onto the labour market in Northern Ireland the probability is that unemployment will be running at 25% by the next General Election. Unless a political breakthrough can be made facilitating a new push to attract inward investment I can foresee practically irresistible pressures building up for an increase in the current UK Treasury subvention of £1.3 billion.
- iv) Sinn Fein: Sinn Fein could yet become the leading Party of the minority community. The SDLP have held their support fairly solid, outside West Belfast, although this has been partially at the expense of the Alliance Party. Sinn Fein's support has been drawn chiefly from hard-line Republicans who previously abstained, young voters and from those who have benefitted from their involvement in community politics. However, should nothing come of the process started by the Forum Report, and if the perception grows in the nationalist community that the Government is more likely to be moved by Sinn Fein than by the relative reason of the SDLP, what one Unionist described as 'the ultimate nightmare' may come about. Were Sinn Fein able to claim to be the authentic voice of the minority, co-operation with the Republic would become more difficult, hopes of devolution on the basis of cross-community involvement would vanish, and our dealings with local government in certain areas would become extremely problematic.

2. The Political Situation

The political situation in Northern Ireland is more fluid than at any time since the 1975 Constitutional Convention. The New Ireland Forum Report has brought constitutional nationalists back into political dialogue and the Northern Ireland Assembly has given many Unionists a taste for bringing back a degree of political power to local politicians. There is an expectation of movement, and even a

willingness in some quarters to acquiesce in unpalatable measures so long as the rewards for the two communities are balanced. The leash on which Unionist politicians claim they are kept by their supporters has, perhaps, been loosened.

The Assembly has proved more durable than I feared or most commentators predicted. It acts as a useful check on direct rule, and as a channel for Unionist protest which might otherwise spill onto the streets. I believe it to be in a healthier state now than at any time since it was established. The Official Unionists will not be easily able to boycott it again given the public's reaction to their boycott after the Darkley murders.

A prime objective in looking for a way forward should, I am convinced, be to give a greater degree of responsibility for their own affairs to local politicians. The fact that none of them has a stake in the government of the Province encourages: irresponsibility; pandering to the prejudices of the respective communities; ^{and} a tendency to blame everything on the British Government. It is too easy for them. I see some force in the argument that because we hold the ring and allow the local politicians to carry on with their old habits, what centre-ground ever existed is being steadily eroded.

I believe we should seek to move on three fronts in parallel: establishing a new relationship with the REpublic of Ireland primarily on a London to Dublin basis; continuing to search for an internal system of government which will command cross-community acquiescence; and taking action to indicate our recognition of the legitimacy of the 'Irish identity'. The trick must be not to be perceived to be rewarding one community at the expense of the other. If progress is likely on the Anglo/Irish front this must be balanced by a genuine attempt to bring about some devolution of power in Northern Ireland. We cannot afford to swap the alienation of the minority community for the alienation of the majority. A middle course has to be found. While it is true that the minority community suffered extensively and quite unacceptably in the period

up to 1969 there may be some truth in the theory that a major factor in the collapse of the Sunningdale arrangements was that the nationalists had been given too much too fast for the Unionists to stomach. This in turn increased the expectations and appetite of the SDLP to an unrealistic level.

3. The Parties

The Official Unionists are split in three directions between the integrationists; the devolutionists; and a small but important group who are integrationist by temperament but who also see the need for reaching an internal accommodation with constitutional nationalists. The philosophy of this latter group is summed up in the document 'The Way Forward'. This document though thin on detail, and intended chiefly as a Unionist counter-balance to the Forum Report was notable for taking a far more generous approach to the 'Irishness' of the minority than any previous Unionist document. Little can be expected of Jim Molyneaux who seems incapable of providing leadership and retains his position chiefly through standing pat and playing off his Party's factions.

'The Way Forward' advocates devolving essentially local government services to the Assembly in a system of 'administrative devolution', under which committee Chairmanships would be shared between the parties. The system would, however, be basically one of majority rule, although it would then be balanced, either by a Bill of Rights guaranteeing the rights of the minority, or by use of weighted majorities for controversial issues. Two major drawbacks are apparent with this: first it would not be sufficiently attractive to tempt the SDLP into participation even if balanced by a significant Anglo-Irish dimension, and the choice of local government powers for devolution is a negation of the document's avowed philosophy of seeking agreement between the parties on the easiest things first. Housing and education are a great deal more controversial than issues like agriculture or industrial development.

The Democratic Unionists remain highly volatile but they currently have a strong commitment to making a success of the Assembly. Dr. Paisley is in a strong position in the aftermath of the European

elections and I am inclined to believe that, within limits, he is genuinely interested in trying to find an accommodation. The DUP reject conventional power-sharing and any Irish dimension is anathema to them. However, Dr. Paisley, who is advocating a system of legislative devolution, using majority rule, is prepared to go further than before in allowing for a system of checks and balances for the protection of the minority. These he would see as being either in the form of appeals to the Secretary of State or to a review body made up equally of unionists and nationalists. Dr. Paisley is also quite pragmatic about the advantages to be gained for Northern Ireland from economic co-operation with the Republic, in a sphere like agriculture, if sovereignty is not thereby threatened.

The Alliance Party continues to adhere to the ideal of power-sharing but have recently produced a new blueprint which may be sufficiently different from the 1974 arrangement to work. Their ideas include: devolved government based on 'partnership' in which committee chairmen elected from the Assembly by proportional representation would act as Ministers without an Executive or Prime Minister; a right of appeal to the Secretary of State by 25% of Assembly members: the enactment of a Bill of Rights; and some expression of the Irish identity.

The SDLP still profess not to be interested in any internal accommodation and John Hume states that London and Dublin have to reach agreement over the way forward over the heads of the politicians in Northern Ireland. The Party is deeply divided and while this hard line view may accurately represent the bottom line of the wing led by Seamus Mallon, there are others who believe intensely in participation. Thus I believe that the SDLP could/ yet be tempted into an internal arrangement, provided that there had been agreement on new Anglo-Irish arrangements, some modifications in security policy, measures to recognise the Irish identity and if the new framework guaranteed them a share in power. This may yet prove too long a shopping list but would represent a considerable scaling down of many of the unrealistic goals (such as joint authority) which they have convinced themselves are possible.

4. Internal Arrangements

After my final round of talks with Party Leaders I cannot claim to be confident about the chances of identifying sufficient common ground to secure new arrangements. But given determination on our part I believe a package might be constructed either on the basis of the 1982 Act through use of the 'partial devolution' option or by using a variant of the proposals made by the Alliance Party. In either case we could contemplate devolving the Departments of Health and Social Services, Economic Development, Environment (excluding housing) and, perhaps, Agriculture. The essential elements of any package would have to be: no Executive or Prime Minister; a sharing of responsibility between the parties; and the areas of traditional sectarian dispute should be reserved to Westminster.

Agreement on any such development would be fragile and would need to be buttressed in two ways. First a method would have to be devised whereby boycotts were not rewarded by allowing any one Party to destroy the whole edifice of agreement. Second a mechanism would need to be instituted providing for a right of appeal from minorities in the Assembly to either a panel of Ombudsmen or to the Secretary of State. This might, at least in the beginning, help ~~shelve~~ those decisions upon which the parties would find it impossible to agree.

5. Anglo-Irish Relations

It may yet transpire that the narrow ground of Northern Ireland will not be broad enough to allow an accommodation between the parties. In such a situation designing a new Anglo-Irish relationship becomes still more important. It is certainly true that no internal arrangement involving constitutional nationalists will be possible without progress on this front. Such progress is also central to improving security and judicial co-operation with the Republic and to reducing the level of alienation among the minority community. I should perhaps enter a caveat on the latter point. The type of measures which we feel able to contemplate, which hopefully fall short of causing a Unionist explosion, should reduce the level of alienation but will not, of themselves, quickly

reconcile many working class Republicans to their situation.

We have made it clear to the Dublin Government that as consent would not be forthcoming from the majority of people in Northern Ireland there can be no question of a united or federal Ireland, or of us agreeing to a system of joint authority (to the extent that this undermined British sovereignty). Arrangements involving a reciprocal 'pooling' of sovereignty might be contemplated but in no other circumstances could sovereignty be significantly affected. Nevertheless there are clearly considerable advantages to be had from a bold departure in Anglo-Irish relations as long as it is not seen by the Unionists to be designed to lead ineluctably to a united Ireland.

We have still to work out how to reconcile any general right of consultation which we might grant to the Republic, with the existence of a devolved government in Northern Ireland. It may be that the right of consultation could be restricted to 'reserved' matters plus those 'transferred' subjects not devolved.

We should also bear in mind that the more tangible the benefits which could accrue to Northern Ireland from new arrangements with the Republic, for example over security or agriculture, the less easy it will be for Unionists to unite against them. If sovereignty is perceived to have been surrendered this may not hold good, but anything which falls short of that may be able to be imposed without an uncontrollable Unionist backlash.

The bargaining counter of an Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Tier is one which should be kept in play. If such a body existed, even as a talking shop, it would have a nationalist majority and be liable to cause us embarrassment. It may on the other hand cause less difficulties for us than several of the other ideas which have been put forward. If it has only consultative status and is drawn solely from the sovereign Parliaments although the Unionists would not participate in it they would probably not take to the streets to oppose it. Conversely, as Dublin is not now showing enthusiasm for such a Body, we may be able to portray its non-establishment as a concession to Unionist sensibilities-given that they have made their opposition to the concept very plain.

6. The Irish Identity

The nationalist community in Northern Ireland has lived in a State for some sixty years in which their identity and cultural heritage have been treated as inferior. For the 50 years of the Stormont Parliament the monolithic Unionist Party governed Northern Ireland. For only five months - in 1974 - have even constitutional nationalists held a share in power.

The British Government has an honourable record of reducing discrimination against the minority through bodies like the Housing Executive, the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR), the Ombudsman and the Fair Employment Agency (FEA). Nevertheless, it would be foolish to pretend that all discrimination has been eliminated. In the economic sphere this would have been especially difficult given the economic circumstances pertaining over the last 15 years.

On security matters the minority feel discriminated against. No doubt much of this feeling springs from the fact that many of them question the legitimacy of the State which the security forces represent. However, since the Protestant paramilitaries have been largely neutralised (for the moment) the great majority of the security forces efforts are, for obvious reasons, concentrated in Catholic areas; mistakes can be made and the law is occasionally enforced in an insensitive manner. All such slips are subsequently used by the extremely effective Republican propaganda machine.

On the political front, the very existence of Northern Ireland is regarded as a victory (oft-paraded) for the Unionists, and nationalists have no stake in power in the North. Added to this a limited number of practices and pieces of legislation still exist which amount to institutional discrimination.

In seeking a new way forward we must seek to convince the minority that while the wishes of the majority must be respected over the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, equally their identity and aspirations can be accommodated. Many of the measures which we might take here would be largely symbolic, but are nevertheless important in creating a new atmosphere. Thus, in security a number of the measures we could take in response to Sir George Baker's review of the Emergency Provisions Act, 1978, would be welcome in

the nationalist community. In the economic sphere our recent steering of Short's to open a subsidiary factory in West Belfast was of importance and we might think of obliging all the district councils to sign the Fair Employment Agency Declaration of Intent. In education there is more that could be done to give encouragement to the Irish language and culture. Finally, in the political sphere there are three obvious contenders for action: repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act which makes it illegal to fly the tricolour in circumstances liable to lead to a breach of the peace; allowing simultaneous membership of the Dail and the Northern Ireland Assembly; and standardising electoral law relating to registration - currently some 7,000 people, mainly Irish passport holders, are disenfranchised in local government elections by old Stormont legislation.

7. Conclusion

As I have said to you before, if any substantial progress is to be made it will require your personal involvement. You, more than any other British politician, are trusted by the Unionists as being rock-solid on the question of Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom. If unpalatable things are to be imposed upon the majority it can only be done using your personal authority.

It is not possible for me to tell whether the Government of the Republic will ultimately be prepared to deliver an acceptable agreement. But if they will I think the gamble is worth taking. The Nationalists often say that British policy towards Ireland has always been one of doing too little too late, and I fear that they have history on their side. It will not be easy to reach agreement in the present situation, but if we do not try strenuously to reach a breakthrough now of two things we can be sure. First, the price of involving the Irish Government and accommodating the nationalist minority will rise; and second in years to come the extent to which a window of opportunity existed in 1984/85 will be exaggerated and we will find ourselves once more charged with dereliction of duty.

As far as I can see we are facing the best opportunity for

progress internally and with the Dublin Government for a decade. Although some of the Official Unionists see advantage for their Party in doing nothing and hoping that creeping integration will take place, others are concerned by the rate at which able young middle class Unionists are migrating to England and some remain convinced that their best guarantee against English perfidy is to take greater control of their own affairs. On the nationalist side the SDLP and the Dublin Government see their cause misused by Sinn Fein and control slipping from their hands. At the very least, there is a greater identity of interest in seeking to move from the present situation than at any previous moment in history. I add an additional thought, more by way of alerting you to a potential danger than to one which currently exists - that is that a Northern Ireland situation which is allowed to fester may become an electoral liability to us! At present Northern Irish affairs have a negligible impact on British politics. There is a mood abroad that no one can solve the situation in the Province. It is not, however, inconceivable that if the feeling were to gain ground that an opportunity to make progress had been missed through timidity that this could be used against us! Certainly a number of outrages in Britain similar to the Harrods bombing, close to an election, could hoist the issue up the agenda and a populist Labour Party might seek to take advantage of the issue. It is a gamble that could backfire on them but may be exactly the type of unstable element which we would be wise to avoid.

Having grappled with the problems for three years I remain convinced that Northern Ireland is different from other parts of the Kingdom. Englishmen, while they can know the situation, can very rarely understand it. Northern Ireland must remain part of the United Kingdom for as long as that is the wish of the majority of her people. But peace will only be possible if the nationalists are allowed a closer identification with their sponsors in Dublin - otherwise they will identify with more malign sponsors; if the Unionists can be persuaded to broaden their society to accommodate constitutional nationalists; and if the Northern Irish have to

shoulder greater responsibility for the affairs of the Province as a whole rather than solely for the affairs of one community or the other.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'J' followed by a vertical line and a small loop at the top.

James Prior.

19th September 1984

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①



Prime Minister

A very unhappy story. Depending on the commitment of your colleagues, you may in due course want to warn Dr. Fitzgerald

MT

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

R -v- DOMINIC McGLINCHEY

C.D.P. 24/29

1. You will no doubt be generally aware of this case but I ought to warn you that we may be heading for a very difficult and embarrassing series of events in connection with it.

2. McGlinchey is a member of INLA (formerly of PIRA) and is one of the most dangerous terrorists in Northern Ireland. The RUC have for some time been seeking his arrest for various offences, including more than one murder, but he has evaded arrest in Northern Ireland and has taken refuge, whenever necessary, in the Republic of Ireland.

3. As you know, we do not have a formal extradition treaty with the Republic but rely instead on a system under which warrants issued in one country are backed by a Magistrate in the other and the fugitive criminal is then usually returned without further judicial formalities. The UK legislation authorising this is the Backing of Warrants (Republic of Ireland) Act 1965 and the Irish have corresponding legislation of their own. In both pieces of legislation, however, there is provision which requires the courts to refuse to permit a fugitive to be returned if (broadly speaking) the offence in question is a political offence. Until very recently, it was virtually impossible for us to secure the return of terrorists from the Republic to Northern Ireland or to Great Britain, since the Irish courts always upheld the claim that their offences were political offences. Successive Irish Governments have consistently refused to amend their law to exclude terrorist cases from the ambit of the "political offence" exception.

4. In 1982, however, McGlinchey was picked up by the Irish police on the strength of a warrant which had been sent down from Northern Ireland to be backed

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and which sought his arrest for the murder, in 1977, of an elderly woman (Mrs McMullen) in the course of what was clearly a PIRA attack. To our surprise and gratification; the Irish courts rejected the suggestion that this could be regarded as a political offence and, in a bold and innovative judgment, the Irish Chief Justice enunciated a new approach to that question. If that approach strikes root and develops, it may be difficult in future for terrorists on the run from the police in Northern Ireland or in Great Britain to find safe refuge in the Republic as they have previously been able to do and this will be achieved without the Irish Government having to amend their law. The judgment in the McGlinchey case has recently been followed and consolidated in another case: the terrorist in that case (Shannon) has now been returned to Northern Ireland to face trial for the murder of Sir Norman Stronge (the former Speaker of the Stormont Parliament) and his son. We plan to build on these two judgments to entrench the acceptance by the Irish courts that the "political offence" exception should not avail terrorists whoever their victims may be, i.e. even if they are policemen or soldiers. In this objective we can at present count on the active co-operation of at least some members of the present Irish Government; including the Attorney General. I must add that where the victim is a soldier or a politician we may find that the extension of the law stops:

5. As a result of the judgment of the Irish courts in McGlinchey's case, McGlinchey himself was in due course - and in rather strange circumstances which I need not go into for the purposes of this minute - handed over to the RUC. This was done despite the fact that he was wanted by the Irish police for various offences which he had committed in the Republic, including the attempted murder of one of them in the course of resisting arrest.

6. It is at this point, with McGlinchey firmly in our custody in Northern Ireland, that our troubles start. The evidence which we are able to adduce in the McMullen case, now more than 7 years old, is very weak. At one time we even feared that we should not be able to proceed with the case at all, but we have now decided that the evidence is at least good enough to justify going ahead with the proceedings for committal. Those proceedings are due to begin tomorrow. They may not succeed. But on balance we think that they will succeed and that McGlinchey will

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be committed for trial: We are much more doubtful whether, when he does come for trial, he will be convicted: there is even a risk that the trial Judge will order a "No Bill" at the outset of the trial on the grounds that the papers do not disclose a sufficient case to answer. There is therefore a real risk that either at the committal proceedings or, more probably, at the trial (which, if it does take place, will be held some time in the new year) McGlinchey will have to be released from custody on the McMullen murder charge.

7. As I have said, McGlinchey is also "wanted" by the RUC for a number of other offences; on some of which the evidence available to us is appreciably stronger than in the McMullen case. The RUC would dearly love to prosecute him for at least some of those offences. However, in the special circumstances in which he was returned to us, the Irish Government sought - and, with the agreement of your predecessor, I felt obliged to give - an undertaking that we would treat the case as if it were governed by the "specialty rule". This is the rule which normally forms part of extradition arrangements and which precludes the requesting State from prosecuting a returned fugitive criminal for any offence committed prior to his return (other than the offence in respect of which he was actually returned), at any rate until he has had an opportunity freely to leave the territory of the requesting State. We do not accept that the specialty rule is applicable to the backing-of-warrants arrangements between the Republic and ourselves but it was clear that, unless I gave an undertaking to observe it in respect of McGlinchey, we should do grave damage to our relations with the Republic in this field and should probably destroy for ever the chances of our building on the recent judgments of the Irish courts in the way I have described above. We also had to give an equivalent assurance in the Shannon case, though the circumstances there were somewhat different. Indeed, in the Shannon case the Irish Chief Justice expressed the view, in the course of his judgment, that "extradition proceeds on the assumption that the rule of specialty will operate": as I have said, that is not a view which we share, at any rate in relation to extradition by way of a backing-of-warrants system; but it is clearly the assumption on which the Irish courts and Government now approach these cases and I am resigned to having to give corresponding assurances in every case where we seek the return of a terrorist if we wish to continue to enjoy the co-operation of the Irish authorities. Among the cases in the pipeline

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on which we hope to have that co-operation is the case of another very dangerous terrorist (Burns) whose return the RUC are currently seeking and also cases involving certain persons whom the Metropolitan Police want in connection with the Hyde Park bombing and other terrorist offences committed in Great Britain.

8. Much as we should like to, we therefore cannot put McGlinchey on trial in Northern Ireland for any other offence if he has to be discharged as a result of the failure of the McMullen case. We have, however, agreed with the Irish authorities that it would be disastrous and intolerable that he should be allowed to go free. We have therefore arranged with them that, in those circumstances, he should be returned to the Republic to face trial there for the offences which he committed there before he was returned to us. To this end we have agreed with them that they should send up warrants, to be backed by a Magistrate in Northern Ireland; in respect of those offences and that these should be in our hands by the time of the committal proceedings. We can then be certain that he can be re-arrested and held in custody, pending his return to the Republic, as soon as he is discharged by the court in the McMullen case, whenever that may be.

9. All this, if it happens, will be embarrassing enough. Both we and the Irish Government will look foolish and there will be criticism from all sides, but on different grounds; of our inability to prove the charge against him after all the drama and publicity of his return and his long retention in custody. I have to tell you, however, that this is by no means the end of our troubles.

10. I think it very probable indeed that McGlinchey, knowing that we are unable to proceeding against him in Northern Ireland for anything else, will challenge the order for his return to the Republic in reliance on the "political offence" exception. That challenge will in due course come before the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland. In April of this year, just after McGlinchey had been extradited from the Republic; I received a letter on this topic from the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Lord Lowry: a copy of that letter, dated 2 April, was also sent to your predecessor and to the Lord Chancellor. In that letter he unmistakably warned us that in that situation (which he clearly saw as a possibility) it was almost certain that extradition would be refused by the judges in Northern Ireland and that

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he himself would refuse to endorse the new approach to the "political offence" exception that had been enunciated by the judges in the Republic. He went on to try to persuade us to avoid that outcome by making an order under s.1(4) of the Suppression of Terrorism Act 1978 (which would enable us to extradite terrorists to the Republic notwithstanding the "political offence" exception and despite the fact that the Republic had failed to accede to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism). In my reply to him of 10 May I explained why that course was not open to us and I tried to deflect him from committing himself too firmly to the position which he had indicated he would take. His response, in his letter of 22 May, was not encouraging but I still entertained the hope that he might, after all, keep an open mind. But I now have to tell you that, when I met him a couple of weeks ago in Belfast, we had a very long, though informal, discussion on this topic and he left me in no doubt that that hope was not to be relied on. He is fully determined that, if the case comes before him in the way I have described above, he will unequivocally dissociate himself from the view of the law which the judges in the Republic have taken and will hold that, in the absence of legislative intervention, our law does not (and, by implication, Irish law should not) permit the return of a fugitive terrorist who discloses a "political motive" for his offence. I do not have to tell you how damaging this would be both in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

11. Whatever Lord Lowry's reasoning may be, it is a fact that a judgment by the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal upholding McGlinchey's challenge to the order for his return and dissenting, either expressly or by implication, from the recent judgments of the Irish courts will, if it happens, face us with a very grave situation. You are in a better position than I to assess its political dimensions but I think that there will be a reaction of public outrage both in this country and in the Republic that, after all our previous complaints about the unco-operative attitude of the Irish in this field and after what the Irish Government and courts have recently done to meet these complaints, our own courts could produce such a result. There may be a lack of logic in that reaction but that will not lessen its political impact. In my view, it will be virtually impossible thereafter for the Irish Government to co-operate with us in the extradition of terrorists to Northern Ireland or to Great Britain - even assuming that they would wish to do so - and I fear

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that we shall also find the ground cut from under our feet in our efforts to secure the extradition of Irish terrorists from the United States and other countries. There will no doubt be serious damage to Anglo/Irish relations over a wider field.

12. What, then, can be done to avert or alleviate these consequences? As soon as I had the first intimation of Lord Lowry's likely attitude, I procured an Opinion from very experienced Counsel on the prospects of getting any such decision by him overruled by the House of Lords. Their advice, which I endorse, is that I should have no difficulty in obtaining leave to appeal to the House of Lords and that the appeal would very probably succeed - though there can of course be no absolute guarantee of that. Counsel think, and again I agree, that the House of Lords are likely to express their concurrence in the new approach to the "political offence" exception adopted by the Irish judges and to dissent from any criticism of it that was made by Lord Lowry in the Northern Ireland courts: but how far they will think it necessary to go in this regard may depend on exactly how the issue arises in the proceedings in the Northern Ireland courts, which in turn will depend on the precise facts of the offences for which his return to the Republic is being sought. I should also point out that, even if the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal does not uphold McGlinchey's challenge, it is still quite possible that McGlinchey himself will appeal to the House of Lords. In that case, there is no reason to alter the assessment that the House of Lords will probably decide in our favour, but the chances of their expressly indicating their agreement with the Irish judges may be somewhat less. If, of course, Lord Lowry has not found it necessary to criticise the view of the law taken by the Irish judges, the silence of the House of Lords on that matter will not trouble us. But if, as I fear is likely, he has vented such criticism, although obiter and in the course of rejecting McGlinchey's challenge on other grounds, it will be very unfortunate indeed if the House of Lords refrain from dissociating themselves from it.

13. One way or another, therefore, I think that it is very probable that the House of Lords will in the end uphold the order for McGlinchey's return and I think that it is probable, but a little less so, that they will; in doing so, indicate

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their support for the view of the law expressed by the Irish judges in their recent judgments. But I doubt if this outcome will wholly undo the damage that will in the meantime have been caused by a judgment of the Court of Appeal of the kind that we have reason to fear; and, in any case, we shall still have to live with the situation created by that judgment until it is overturned.

14. I thought it right to warn you of this danger on the horizon. It if materialises, it is unlikely to do so before about the beginning of the new year, perhaps much later than that.

15. I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

M.H.

24 September, 1984

LAW OFFICERS' DEPARTMENT
ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Prime Minister

eDP 24/9

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

24th September 1984

Dear Mr Butler

eDD 25/9

PIRA THREAT TO SUPERMARKET CHAIN

1. The Secretary of State minuted the Prime Minister about this on 20 September.
2. This morning, the Secretary of State and Mr Prior discussed the matter with Mr Gary Weston and his Financial Adviser, Mr Bailey. I was also present.
3. With Mr Prior's support, the Secretary of State explained that there was now both press reports ("Irish Press" of 15 September, copy attached) and a large sum of money had found its way by a circuitous route to the Dublin branch of the Bank of Ireland, and that some of this money had already been withdrawn.
4. Both the Secretary of State and Mr Prior pressed Mr Weston and Mr Bailey repeatedly to disclose whether they were aware or could think of any part of the Weston business empire or family who might have been involved in these transactions. Mr Weston and Mr Bailey disclaimed any knowledge of or insight into what might have happened. They also stated that they understood the position of HMG on resistance to terrorism, and continued to support HMG's position fully.
5. Mr Weston and Mr Bailey also undertook to do everything in their power to try to find out whether any part of Mr Weston's business or family had been involved in any way. They also undertook to do whatever they could, if they did discover any involvement, to stop any more money being paid to PIRA.
6. Mr Weston and Mr Bailey also undertook to inform the Secretary of State of anything they might discover, and the Secretary of State promised to keep in touch with them as far as was consistent
7. This letter is for information only at this stage. I will write again if the Secretary of State feels the personal involvement of the Prime Minister would be helpful.
8. Copies of this letter go for information to Hugh Taylor and Len Appleyard.

Yours Sincerely
Neil Wood

for G K SANDIFORD (in Belfast)
PS/Secretary of State

SECRET

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They are by way
to go too fast
I - view of my
last visit to
Dublin - the
Unionists will

Prime Minister

Agree that Sir

Robert Armstrong should
proceed as proposed in
para. 9 ?

C.D.P. 24/9

Ref. A084/2367

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

Following your meeting with the Taoiseach on 3 September, I had a further round of talks in Dublin on 19 September with Mr Dermot Nally, who was accompanied by Mr Donlon (Secretary of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs), Mr Lillis and Mr Dorr (Irish Ambassador in London). I was accompanied by Mr Alan Goodison (HM Ambassador in Dublin) and Mr David Goodall.

2. It at once became clear that the Irish side had fully taken the point which you emphasised in your meeting with the Taoiseach, and understood and accepted that what was now under discussion was not joint sovereignty or joint authority but a possible package whereby, in return for amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution and a waiving of the Republic's territorial claim on the North, the British Government would afford the Republic a right of institutionalised consultation in Northern Ireland. They said that they were prepared to explore with us the form which such consultation might take, and the areas it might cover; but they stressed that this would be without prejudice to the judgment which only Ministers on both sides could in due course make as to the political feasibility of what had been worked out. I said that exactly the same caveat applied on our side, and that we regarded ourselves as taking part jointly with them in a strictly exploratory process.

3. It also became clear early on in our discussion that, although there was no ambiguity in the Irish understanding that final decisions on matters covered by consultation would remain with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, they had difficulty with the word "consultation" itself. They argued that it would be impossible for an Irish Government to carry a referendum to amend the Constitution in return for something expressly described as "consultation", which critics would represent as imposing no obligation on the British Government to



take account of Irish concerns. They therefore hoped that some other way could be found to describe what was proposed. They acknowledged that this was one aspect of what was likely to be a general problem of reconciling the need for "transparency" in whatever arrangements are agreed with the conflicting presentational needs of the two Governments, the British Government needing to reassure the Unionists that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom was fully protected, and the Irish Government to persuade the Nationalists and the people of the Republic that there was some significant achievement to balance the waiving of the territorial claims.

4. The Irish welcomed our ideas for a joint security commission and an all-Ireland Law Commission. At the same time they argued strongly that if the new arrangements were to reverse the alienation of the minority community it was essential that they should include some early and visible modifications in the present structures of law enforcement in the North. Unless the two Governments could point to tangible changes for the better in this area it would be impossible for the SDLP to put their weight behind the new arrangements and persuade the minority that they were other than cosmetic. They therefore continued to press for changes in the structure of the RUC to permit the establishment of separate Catholic police forces to operate in the Catholic areas. After considerable discussion, however, Mr Nally appeared to accept that this was not practicable, and that it would be more profitable to explore ways in which Catholic recruitment to the RUC might be increased, with a view to moving towards a situation in which a majority of police officers operating in Catholic areas would de facto be Catholics.

5. They also showed some interest in the idea of setting up a separate security force to deal with terrorism, possibly on both sides of the border. Such a force might be recruited both from the RUC and from the Garda, could serve under a Commander appointed jointly by the two Governments on the advice of the



joint security commission, and could pool resources (for instance of intelligence) from both sides of the border. They reckoned that the creation of such a force would help to reduce the suspicion and distrust in which the RUC is held at present by the minority community in Northern Ireland.

6. The other aspect of law enforcement in which the Irish looked for change was in the courts. Here they hoped it might be possible to move to a system whereby terrorist crimes committed in the North could be tried by a panel of three judges, one of whom would be from the South; and crimes committed in the South would be tried by a similar panel of three judges including one from the North. In each case the law being administered would be that of the country in which the crime was committed, and appeal would lie to the appeal court of the jurisdiction in which the trial took place. They believed that such an arrangement could be introduced without the need for constitutional change on their side and would have the advantage of being, and being seen to be, strictly reciprocal. It was agreed that the possibilities for changes in the police and the courts on the lines discussed merited further detailed examination in the light of expert advice. The relationship of the police force to the proposed joint security commission, and the remit to be given to that commission, would also need further study.

7. In general, the Irish thought that the consultative arrangements could best be presented as a development of the existing Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council (to which Mr Haughey as well as Dr FitzGerald had put his name). I indicated that this would be acceptable to us. They suggested that there should be an intergovernmental commission or committee within the AIIC framework to deal with Northern Ireland affairs. It would comprise a Minister from either side, and would be the organ through which consultation should be carried out. The Irish Minister would either himself reside in Belfast or have a representative there: I suggested that it might be better, at any rate at first, for the Minister not himself to



be the resident presence in Belfast. On the subject matter for consultation, they envisaged that foreign affairs, defence and finance would be reserved to Britain as the sovereign power, but that in principle the right of consultation would apply to all other areas of authority in the Province except those which might be devolved to a reconstituted local Assembly and power-sharing Executive. (ie it would apply in all areas (other than the reserved areas) in which the Secretary of State exercised the authority of Her Majesty's Government in Northern Ireland). They argued that it should be an objective to bring about a large measure of devolution, and that this objective should be pursued at the same time as this package. They recognised that, because of Unionist opposition, this might be difficult to achieve as part of a package providing for Southern Irish involvement in Northern Irish affairs. But they believed that there would be attractions for the Unionists in participating in a devolved administration, since the greater the area of authority exercised by the Assembly and the Executive, the narrower would be the area in which the Irish Government would have a consultative say. They also revived the idea of a "Parliamentary Tier" as a useful element in a possible package, though they conceded that it was not a top priority.

8. On the Irish side of the equation, Mr Nally said that the form of the proposed change in the Irish Constitution had yet to be decided, but that its purpose would be threefold: to substitute an aspiration to unity for the present territorial claim; to make it clear that violence in pursuit of that aspiration was absolutely abjured; and to emphasise that the aspiration could not be realised without the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland. The Irish envisaged that the package as a whole would be embodied in a formal international agreement (for historical reasons they would not want to call it a Treaty) which would recognise the equal validity of both the Nationalist and Unionist identities in Ireland and would guarantee satisfactory, secure and durable political, administrative and symbolic expression to both identities.



9. This note covers the main points to emerge from a full day's discussion, and concentrates on describing the Irish position. It was clearly understood that our exchanges continued to be exploratory and without commitment on either side; and I was careful to stress that the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had not yet had time to address the issues. But it was agreed that the discussion so far had revealed sufficient common ground to justify further careful examination of all the elements identified, with a view to drawing up the outline of a hypothetical package for consideration by the two Governments. We thought that one or two further rounds of exploratory talks would probably be needed in order to refine the package to the point at which a full report could be made to Ministers, and considered at the Anglo-Irish Summit in mid-November. We provisionally agreed to hold a further meeting early in October in the United Kingdom. Both sides stressed the importance of maintaining absolute confidentiality about our exchanges until the outline was complete and Ministers were able to reach a considered judgment on them. I shall be discussing with Mr Andrew and Mr Goodall the work which we now need to put in hand by way of preparation for the next meeting with the Irish. Meanwhile I should be grateful to know that you and the two Secretaries of State are content for us to proceed accordingly, and to prepare papers for consideration by Ministers before the next exploratory meetings with the Irish.

Too soon~

10. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Antony Acland, Mr Robert Andrew, Mr David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

24 September 1984

SECRET

Copy No 1 of 6



Meeting with Garfield Weston now fixed by SSMI for 24 September. Suspend action until after that.

PRIME MINISTER *C.D.P. 21/9*

Prime Minister 18

This is very serious. Obviously our Ambassador must do all he can to try to block payments from the account.

Ought you to speak to the Taoiseach (in guarded terms) on the telephone? He rang you on this subject in January.

PIRA THREAT TO SUPERMARKET CHAIN

I don't nor do you on the phone

You may recall at the beginning of this year we learnt of a threat by the PIRA to a supermarket chain in both the North and South of Ireland owned by the Weston family. The background is set out in your Private Secretary's letter to this office of 11 January recording a conversation which you had with Jim Prior on that date. Since then there have been conflicting reports on whether the Weston family have agreed to pay over the protection money demanded. Jim Prior, who knows Garfield Weston well, received assurances from him as recently as 11 July that no money had been paid over and similar statements have been made to the police. But information has been building up which suggests that the Weston family in fact decided some months ago to meet the PIRA demand.

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The belief of the Irish police that the money had been paid over by the Weston family was mentioned to Jim Prior when he visited the Taoiseach and Mr Barry in Dublin on 30 August; but the details stated above have only just come to our attention. The intelligence comes from a sensitive source and is not in the form of evidence which can be given to the Bank of Ireland as grounds for preventing the remaining money from being drawn out. Representations were made to the Irish Government through the Embassy in Dublin on 18 September to see whether they could put pressure on the bank

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to/....

SECRET

to freeze the account; but although the matter was I understand referred to the Taoiseach and the Attorney General it seems they concluded that nothing could be done to stop the money being paid out, since there was no way of establishing a link between the transaction and the PIRA. Nor could foreign exchange regulations be used to prevent the money being paid out. Nevertheless, I understand that the Garda have persuaded the bank to delay payment for the time being. As far as I know, the position today is that the balance of the money has not yet been drawn out.

I do not need to emphasise the very serious consequences of such a large sum of money finding its way into the hands of the PIRA and being used for the purchase of arms. I hope that HM Ambassador will continue to do all in his power to encourage the Irish Government to find a way of frustrating this transaction. I have today discussed the matter with Mr Prior, and he and I will seek an early opportunity to see Mr Garfield Weston to emphasise the very serious implications of what is happening.

I am copying this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary.

Cusham Santiford

D H

20 September 1984

(Approved by the Secretary of State
and signed in his absence)



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 September 1984

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your valedictory note. It is full of wisdom, percipience and sound sense. It will be an enormous help to me and, I am sure, to Douglas. If you agree, I should like to show it to a few close colleagues so that they too can benefit from it.

I am most grateful to you for setting everything down so clearly.

Yours

James Prior

* i.e. Willie, Leon & Geoffrey.

The Rt. Hon. James Prior, M.P.

Src



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Prime Minister

I don't think
you would
quarrel with much
in this.

You might
ask him if you
can circulate it

and myself

Sept 1962

Dear Margaret,

Edward Bitchan

have prepared this valedictory note on

Modern Ireland

I hope you may find

it useful, and of course I am copying

it to Douglas.

to close
colleagues.

Yours

Reply attached
for signature
(it avoids substance,
for reasons of
security)

CJP

19/8.

Prime Minister

1. Having relinquished my post in Northern Ireland I thought that you and Douglas Hurd might find it helpful if I were to set out the current position as I see it, and to indicate where progress might be made. While an unsuccessful and over-ambitious attempt to move things forward could destroy the greater stability which has developed in the Province in recent years, I am convinced that things cannot be left as they are. On a number of fronts matters are moving in our favour but the long-term prognosis is not good. The following factors are of relevance:

- i) The Government in the Republic: the present coalition Government wishes to make progress in Northern Ireland on a basis which falls short of a united or federal Ireland. Their present bidding is far too high but an agreement may prove possible both because ^{of} Dr. FitzGerald's personal commitment to exorcising the constitutional issue and because of their fear of the impact of Sinn Fein in the South. The return to power of Mr. Haughey could only be inimical to constructive developments in Northern Ireland and could well handicap co-operation on security matters.
- ii) The security situation: the number of deaths so far this year is a little higher than for the same period in 1983. The level of violence has, in general, been ratched down to its lowest level for 15 years - although the situation in some border areas remains tense. The line can be held, probably indefinitely, but I must caution you that in the absence of measures to reduce the alienation from authority of many in the nationalist community the potential for deterioration, and considerably increased casualties in the security forces, is much greater than for an improvement. I should also say that I do not believe that a political breakthrough could, of itself, end the violence. In the short-term it could make it worse. Although it would reduce violence thereafter, the para-militaries are now so deeply involved with organised crime that it is difficult to see a complete and early return to normality.

- iii) the economy: there has been a less strong recovery than in the rest of the United Kingdom. Despite good performances by Harland and Wolff and Shorts it amounts to little more than a deceleration in the rate of economic decline. Given the large number of young people coming onto the labour market in Northern Ireland the probability is that unemployment will be running at 25% by the next General Election. Unless a political breakthrough can be made facilitating a new push to attract inward investment I can foresee practically irresistible pressures building up for an increase in the current UK Treasury subvention of £1.3 billion.
- iv) Sinn Fein: Sinn Fein could yet become the leading Party of the minority community. The SDLP have held their support fairly solid, outside West Belfast, although this has been partially at the expense of the Alliance Party. Sinn Fein's support has been drawn chiefly from hard-line Republicans who previously abstained, young voters and from those who have benefitted from their involvement in community politics. However, should nothing come of the process started by the Forum Report, and if the perception grows in the nationalist community that the Government is more likely to be moved by Sinn Fein than by the relative reason of the SDLP, what one Unionist described as 'the ultimate nightmare' may come about. Were Sinn Fein able to claim to be the authentic voice of the minority, co-operation with the Republic would become more difficult, hopes of devolution on the basis of cross-community involvement would vanish, and our dealings with local government in certain areas would become extremely problematic.

2. The Political Situation

The political situation in Northern Ireland is more fluid than at any time since the 1975 Constitutional Convention. The New Ireland Forum Report has brought constitutional nationalists back into political dialogue and the Northern Ireland Assembly has given many Unionists a taste for bringing back a degree of political power to local politicians. There is an expectation of movement, and even a

willingness in some quarters to acquiesce in unpalatable measures so long as the rewards for the two communities are balanced. The leash on which Unionist politicians claim they are kept by their supporters has, perhaps, been loosened.

The Assembly has proved more durable than I feared or most commentators predicted. It acts as a useful check on direct rule, and as a channel for Unionist protest which might otherwise spill onto the streets. I believe it to be in a healthier state now than at any time since it was established. The Official Unionists will not be easily able to boycott it again given the public's reaction to their boycott after the Darkley murders.

A prime objective in looking for a way forward should, I am convinced, be to give a greater degree of responsibility for their own affairs to local politicians. The fact that none of them has a stake in the government of the Province encourages: irresponsibility; pandering to the prejudices of the respective communities; ^{and} a tendency to blame everything on the British Government. It is too easy for them. I see some force in the argument that because we hold the ring and allow the local politicians to carry on with their old habits, what centre-ground ever existed is being steadily eroded.

I believe we should seek to move on three fronts in parallel: establishing a new relationship with the Republic of Ireland primarily on a London to Dublin basis; continuing to search for an internal system of government which will command cross-community acquiescence; and taking action to indicate our recognition of the legitimacy of the 'Irish identity'. The trick must be not to be perceived to be rewarding one community at the expense of the other. If progress is likely on the Anglo/Irish front this must be balanced by a genuine attempt to bring about some devolution of power in Northern Ireland. We cannot afford to swap the alienation of the minority community for the alienation of the majority. A middle course has to be found. While it is true that the minority community suffered extensively and quite unacceptably in the period

up to 1969 there may be some truth in the theory that a major factor in the collapse of the Sunningdale arrangements was that the nationalists had been given too much too fast for the Unionists to stomach. This in turn increased the expectations and appetite of the SDLP to an unrealistic level.

3. The Parties

The Official Unionists are split in three directions between the integrationists; the devolutionists; and a small but important group who are integrationist by temperament but who also see the need for reaching an internal accommodation with constitutional nationalists. The philosophy of this latter group is summed up in the document 'The Way Forward'. This document though thin on detail, and intended chiefly as a Unionist counter-balance to the Forum Report was notable for taking a far more generous approach to the 'Irishness' of the minority than any previous Unionist document. Little can be expected of Jim Molyneaux who seems incapable of providing leadership and retains his position chiefly through standing pat and playing off his Party's factions.

'The Way Forward' advocates devolving essentially local government services to the Assembly in a system of 'administrative devolution', under which committee Chairmanships would be shared between the parties. The system would, however, be basically one of majority rule, although it would then be balanced, either by a Bill of Rights guaranteeing the rights of the minority, or by use of weighted majorities for controversial issues. Two major drawbacks are apparent with this: first it would not be sufficiently attractive to tempt the SDLP into participation even if balanced by a significant Anglo-Irish dimension, and the choice of local government powers for devolution is a negation of the document's avowed philosophy of seeking agreement between the parties on the easiest things first. Housing and education are a great deal more controversial than issues like agriculture or industrial development.

The Democratic Unionists remain highly volatile but they currently have a strong commitment to making a success of the Assembly. Dr. Paisley is in a strong position in the aftermath of the European

elections and I am inclined to believe that, within limits, he is genuinely interested in trying to find an accommodation. The DUP reject conventional power-sharing and any Irish dimension is anathema to them. However, Dr. Paisley, who is advocating a system of legislative devolution, using majority rule, is prepared to go further than before in allowing for a system of checks and balances for the protection of the minority. These he would see as being either in the form of appeals to the Secretary of State or to a review body made up equally of unionists and nationalists. Dr. Paisley is also quite pragmatic about the advantages to be gained for Northern Ireland from economic co-operation with the Republic, in a sphere like agriculture, if sovereignty is not thereby threatened.

The Alliance Party continues to adhere to the ideal of power-sharing but have recently produced a new blueprint which may be sufficiently different from the 1974 arrangement to work. Their ideas include: devolved government based on 'partnership' in which committee chairmen elected from the Assembly by proportional representation would act as Ministers without an Executive or Prime Minister; a right of appeal to the Secretary of State by 25% of Assembly members: the enactment of a Bill of Rights; and some expression of the Irish identity.

The SDLP still profess not to be interested in any internal accommodation and John Hume states that London and Dublin have to reach agreement over the way forward over the heads of the politicians in Northern Ireland. The Party is deeply divided and while this hard line view may accurately represent the bottom line of the wing led by Seamus Mallon, there are others who believe intensely in participation. Thus I believe that the SDLP could yet be tempted into an internal arrangement, provided that there had been agreement on new Anglo-Irish arrangements, some modifications in security policy, measures to recognise the Irish identity and if the new framework guaranteed them a share in power. This may yet prove too long a shopping list but would represent a considerable scaling down of many of the unrealistic goals (such as joint authority) which they have convinced themselves are possible.

4. Internal Arrangements

After my final round of talks with Party Leaders I cannot claim to be confident about the chances of identifying sufficient common ground to secure new arrangements. But given determination on our part I believe a package might be constructed either on the basis of the 1982 Act through use of the 'partial devolution' option or by using a variant of the proposals made by the Alliance Party. In either case we could contemplate devolving the Departments of Health and Social Services, Economic Development, Environment (excluding housing) and, perhaps, Agriculture. The essential elements of any package would have to be: no Executive or Prime Minister; a sharing of responsibility between the parties; and the areas of traditional sectarian dispute should be reserved to Westminster.

Agreement on any such development would be fragile and would need to be buttressed in two ways. First a method would have to be devised whereby boycotts were not rewarded by allowing any one Party to destroy the whole edifice of agreement. Second a mechanism would need to be instituted providing for a right of appeal from minorities in the Assembly to either a panel of Ombudsmen or to the Secretary of State. This might, at least in the beginning, help ~~shelve~~ those decisions upon which the parties would find it impossible to agree.

5. Anglo-Irish Relations

It may yet transpire that the narrow ground of Northern Ireland will not be broad enough to allow an accommodation between the parties. In such a situation designing a new Anglo-Irish relationship becomes still more important. It is certainly true that no internal arrangement involving constitutional nationalists will be possible without progress on this front. Such progress is also central to improving security and judicial co-operation with the Republic and to reducing the level of alienation among the minority community. I should perhaps enter a caveat on the latter point. The type of measures which we feel able to contemplate, which hopefully fall short of causing a Unionist explosion, should reduce the level of alienation but will not, of themselves, quickly

reconcile many working class Republicans to their situation.

We have made it clear to the Dublin Government that as consent would not be forthcoming from the majority of people in Northern Ireland there can be no question of a united or federal Ireland, or of us agreeing to a system of joint authority (to the extent that this undermined British sovereignty). Arrangements involving a reciprocal 'pooling' of sovereignty might be contemplated but in no other circumstances could sovereignty be significantly affected. Nevertheless there are clearly considerable advantages to be had from a bold departure in Anglo-Irish relations as long as it is not seen by the Unionists to be designed to lead ineluctably to a united Ireland.

We have still to work out how to reconcile any general right of consultation which we might grant to the Republic, with the existence of a devolved government in Northern Ireland. It may be that the right of consultation could be restricted to 'reserved' matters plus those 'transferred' subjects not devolved.

We should also bear in mind that the more tangible the benefits which could accrue to Northern Ireland from new arrangements with the Republic, for example over security or agriculture, the less easy it will be for Unionists to unite against them. If sovereignty is perceived to have been surrendered this may not hold good, but anything which falls short of that may be able to be imposed without an uncontrollable Unionist backlash.

The bargaining counter of an Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Tier is one which should be kept in play. If such a body existed, even as a talking shop, it would have a nationalist majority and be liable to cause us embarrassment. It may on the other hand cause less difficulties for us than several of the other ideas which have been put forward. If it has only consultative status and is drawn solely from the sovereign Parliaments although the Unionists would not participate in it they would probably not take to the streets to oppose it. Conversely, as Dublin is not now showing enthusiasm for such a Body, we may be able to portray its non-establishment as a concession to Unionist sensibilities-given that they have made their opposition to the concept very plain.

6. The Irish Identity

The nationalist community in Northern Ireland has lived in a State for some sixty years in which their identity and cultural heritage have been treated as inferior. For the 50 years of the Stormont Parliament the monolithic Unionist Party governed Northern Ireland. For only five months - in 1974 - have even constitutional nationalists held a share in power.

The British Government has an honourable record of reducing discrimination against the minority through bodies like the Housing Executive, the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR), the Ombudsman and the Fair Employment Agency (FEA). Nevertheless, it would be foolish to pretend that all discrimination has been eliminated. In the economic sphere this would have been especially difficult given the economic circumstances pertaining over the last 15 years.

On security matters the minority feel discriminated against. No doubt much of this feeling springs from the fact that many of them question the legitimacy of the State which the security forces represent. However, since the Protestant paramilitaries have been largely neutralised (for the moment) the great majority of the security forces efforts are, for obvious reasons, concentrated in Catholic areas; mistakes can be made and the law is occasionally enforced in an insensitive manner. All such slips are subsequently used by the extremely effective Republican propaganda machine.

On the political front, the very existence of Northern Ireland is regarded as a victory (oft-paraded) for the Unionists, and nationalists have no stake in power in the North. Added to this a limited number of practices and pieces of legislation still exist which amount to institutional discrimination.

In seeking a new way forward we must seek to convince the minority that while the wishes of the majority must be respected over the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, equally their identity and aspirations can be accommodated. Many of the measures which we might take here would be largely symbolic, but are nevertheless important in creating a new atmosphere. Thus, in security a number of the measures we could take in response to Sir George Baker's review of the Emergency Provisions Act, 1978, would be welcome in

the nationalist community. In the economic sphere our recent steering of Short's to open a subsidiary factory in West Belfast was of importance and we might think of obliging all the district councils to sign the Fair Employment Agency Declaration of Intent. In education there is more that could be done to give encouragement to the Irish language and culture. Finally, in the political sphere there are three obvious contenders for action: repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act which makes it illegal to fly the tricolour in circumstances liable to lead to a breach of the peace; allowing simultaneous membership of the Dail and the Northern Ireland Assembly; and standardising electoral law relating to registration - currently some 7,000 people, mainly Irish passport holders, are disenfranchised in local government elections by old Stormont legislation.

7. Conclusion

As I have said to you before, if any substantial progress is to be made it will require your personal involvement. You, more than any other British politician, are trusted by the Unionists as being rock-solid on the question of Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom. If unpalatable things are to be imposed upon the majority it can only be done using your personal authority.

It is not possible for me to tell whether the Government of the Republic will ultimately be prepared to deliver an acceptable agreement. But if they will I think the gamble is worth taking. The Nationalists often say that British policy towards Ireland has always been one of doing too little too late, and I fear that they have history on their side. It will not be easy to reach agreement in the present situation, but if we do not try strenuously to reach a breakthrough now of two things we can be sure. First, the price of involving the Irish Government and accommodating the nationalist minority will rise; and second in years to come the extent to which a window of opportunity existed in 1984/85 will be exaggerated and we will find ourselves once more charged with dereliction of duty.

As far as I can see we are facing the best opportunity for

progress internally and with the Dublin Government for a decade. Although some of the Official Unionists see advantage for their Party in doing nothing and hoping that creeping integration will take place, others are concerned by the rate at which able young middle class Unionists are migrating to England and some remain convinced that their best guarantee against English perfidy is to take greater control of their own affairs. On the nationalist side the SDLP and the Dublin Government see their cause misused by Sinn Fein and control slipping from their hands. At the very least, there is a greater identity of interest in seeking to move from the present situation than at any previous moment in history. I add an additional thought, more by way of alerting you to a potential danger than to one which currently exists - that is that a Northern Ireland situation which is allowed to fester may become an electoral liability to us. At present Northern Irish affairs have a negligible impact on British politics. There is a mood abroad that no one can solve the situation in the Province. It is not, however, inconceivable that if the feeling were to gain ground that an opportunity to make progress had been missed through timidity that this could be used against us. Certainly a number of outrages in Britain similar to the Harrods bombing, close to an election, could hoist the issue up the agenda and a populist Labour Party might seek to take advantage of the issue. It is a gamble that could backfire on them but may be exactly the type of unstable element which we would be wise to avoid.

Having grappled with the problems for three years I remain convinced that Northern Ireland is different from other parts of the Kingdom. Englishmen, while they can know the situation, can very rarely understand it. Northern Ireland must remain part of the United Kingdom for as long as that is the wish of the majority of her people. But peace will only be possible if the nationalists are allowed a closer identification with their sponsors in Dublin - otherwise they will identify with more malign sponsors; if the Unionists can be persuaded to broaden their society to accommodate constitutional nationalists; and if the Northern Irish have to

shoulder greater responsibility for the affairs of the Province as a whole rather than solely for the affairs of one community or the other.



James Prior.

19th September 1984



da
17

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 September 1984

AFTERCARE OF AN ARMY AGENT

The Prime Minister has noted the Defence Secretary's minute (MO 19/3/15) about the difficulties which have arisen with the resettlement in England of one of the Army's agents from Northern Ireland. She was grateful to be kept informed.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Hugh Taylor (Home Office), Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C.D. Powell

Richard Mottram, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

SECRET & PERSONAL

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GRS 840
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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 461 OF 11 SEPTEMBER 1984
AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (LONDON) NIO (BELFAST)

ADVANCE COPY
IMMEDIATE

ms

APPOINTMENT OF NEW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

SUMMARY

1. THE APPOINTMENT OF MR HURD AS SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND IS THE LEAD ITEM IN THIS MORNING'S DUBLIN NEWSPAPERS. REACTIONS ARE CAUTIOUS, BUT NOT UNFAVOURABLE.

DETAIL

2. THE "IRISH TIMES" LEADS WITH AN ARTICLE HEADED "HURD GETS FIRST POST IN CABINET AS NI SECRETARY" IN WHICH DAVID MCKITTRICK SAYS THAT HIS LACK OF PREVIOUS CABINET EXPERIENCE "RAISED DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER HE WILL CARRY ENOUGH POLITICAL WEIGHT TO PRESS FOR THE FAR-REACHING INITIATIVE ON THE NORTH WHICH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY ADVOCATING". HE ADDS:

"APART FROM SUNNINGDALE, MR HURD HAS SHOWN NO INTEREST IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN HIS CAREER TO DATE, APART FROM ONE EPISODE IN 1978 WHEN HE TOOK PART IN BBC NORTHERN IRELAND'S "SPOTLIGHT" PROGRAMME. DURING A VISIT TO BELFAST HE MET SINN FEIN PRESIDENT MR GERRY ADAMS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UDA".

ELSEWHERE, MCKITTRICK SUGGESTS THAT THE MEETING WITH ADAMS IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF "INITIAL DISADVANTAGES" WHICH WILL ACCOMPANY MR HURD TO BELFAST. ED MOLONEY ("IRISH TIMES" NORTHERN EDITOR) DEVOTES A WHOLE ARTICLE TO THE MEETING, AND ANOTHER (HEADED "ANXIETY AND CAUTION IN NORTH") TO REACTIONS IN THE NORTH TO THE APPOINTMENT: IE "ANXIETY IN THE RANKS OF THE OUP, CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM AMONG SOME IN THE SDLP AND IN THE ALLIANCE PARTY, EQUANIMITY IN THE DUP AND SCORN FROM SINN FEIN".

EQUANIMITY IN THE DUP AND SCORN FROM SINN FEIN''.

3. THE ''INDEPENDENT'' LEADS ON THE STATEMENT (SEE MIFT) ISSUED LAST NIGHT BY THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AFTER A MEETING WITH JOHN HUME, UNDER THE HEADLINE ''GOVERNMENT STANCE AFFIRMED AS HURD GOES NORTH''. OF MR HURD'S APPOINTMENT IT SAYS: ''THE CHOICE WAS SEEN IN WESTMINSTER LAST NIGHT AS A SIGN THAT THE PROBLEMS OF THE NORTH HAVE MOVED SLIGHTLY HIGHER UP MRS THATCHER'S LIST OF PRIORITIES.'' ANOTHER FRONT PAGE ARTICLE, HEADED ''NEW NI MAN GETS MIXED RECEPTION'', SAYS THAT THE APPOINTMENT WAS GREETED WITH ''BOTH GUARDED WELCOME AND OUTRIGHT ATTACK'' IN THE NORTH. THE INSIDE PAGES CARRY FURTHER ARTICLES: ''HIGH-FLYING HURD THATCHER'S ACE'' (NICHOLAS LEONARD) AND ''LOYALIST UNEASE GREET'S NORTH'S NEW SECRETARY'' (PETER MCKENNA).

4. THE ''IRISH PRESS'', UNDER THE HEADLINE ''TORY 'ODD COUPLE' CHOSEN FOR THE NORTH'' SAYS THAT THE APPOINTMENTS OF MR HURD AND DR BOYSON WERE SEEN AS A ''POLITICAL BALANCING ACT''. ACCORDING TO THE ''PRESS'', UNIONISTS REACTED WITH ''UNEASE AND SUSPICION'', WHILST THE SDLP GAVE ''A QUALIFIED WELCOME''. THE ''PRESS'' GIVES THE ONLY STATEMENT FROM AN IRISH POLITICIAN, QUOTING MICHAEL O'KENNEDY OF FIANNA FAIL AS SAYING ''I FOUND MR HURD VERY CONSISTENT AND EASY TO WORK WITH. HE HAD AN OPEN MIND''. LIKE THE OTHER PAPERS, THE ''PRESS'' REFERS TO MR HURD'S MEETING WITH SINN FEIN LEADERS. A PROFILE BY THEIR LONDON EDITOR, HEADED ''HURD - A SHREWD MIND BEHIND A BLANK MASK'', SPECULATES THAT MR HURD WILL ATTEND THE BIA CONFERENCE IN CAMBRIDGE.

5. EDITORIAL COMMENT IS MIXED: THE ''INDEPENDENT'' ECHOES MR HUME'S REACTION TO THE APPOINTMENT: MR HURD ''HAS THE QUALITIES FOR THE JOB BUT WILL HE BE GIVEN THE POLICIES A NORTHERN SECRETARY OF STATE NEEDS IF HE IS TO DO SOMETHING?.... MR HURD WILL NOT BE TESTED UNTIL THE THE BRITISH AND IRISH PRIME MINISTERS HAVE STARTED TO MAP OUT A ROAD FOR THE NORTH. WHAT IS DECIDED BETWEEN THEM WILL, IN THE SHORT TERM, HAVE TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE NEW MAN IN THE NORTH. HE MAY WISH HE HAD NEVER LEFT LONDON''. THE IRISH PRESS SEES THE APPOINTMENT AS SURPRISING. IT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT MR HURD'S INVOLVEMENT IN SUNNINGDALE CAN BE ''COUNTED AS A PLUS'', BUT SAYS THAT MR HURD IS ''ABOUT TO LAUNCH OUT ON A PATH WELL CALCULATED TO SHOW HIM EXACTLY HOW DEADLY SOME GAMES CAN BE''.

6. THE ''IRISH TIMES'' DESCRIBES MR HURD AS A MAN OF MANY PARTS'', BUT IS CAUTIOUS ABOUT HIS PROSPECTS: ''HE DOES NOT HAVE PLENIPOTENTIARY POWERS; HE IS A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH CABINET, BOUND BY GOVERNMENT POLICY AND DOMINATED BY A STUBBORN PRIME MINISTER''. IT CONCLUDES, HOWEVER:

''THIS IS A TIME FOR NEW DEPARTURES; AND A GOOD TIME TO FIT A NEW FACE TO A NEW POLICY. MR HURD HAS A CHOICE; HE CAN SERVE OUT A TERM OF OFFICE IN THE NORTH, HOPING FOR NO MORE THAN THE AVOIDANCE OF MAJOR ERRORS, OR HE CAN MAKE HIMSELF AN IMPORTANT PART OF SOMETHING DIFFERENT, SOMETHING OPEN AND IMAGINATIVE. THIS IS THE RISKY COURSE, BUT IT IS THE RIGHT COURSE FOR AN AMBITIOUS MAN, A MAN WITH A SENSE OF HISTORY, AND IT IS ALSO RIGHT IN ITSELF.''

CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 715

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FM WASHINGTON 072359Z SEP 84

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 2664 DATED 7 SEPTEMBER

INFO NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN, CG NEW YORK, BIS NEW YORK.
INFO SAVING LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO, BOSTON, CHICAGO,
HOUSTON, ATLANTA.

ms

NORTHERN IRELAND: POSSIBLE SENATE HEARING.

SUMMARY.

1. SENATOR HATCH HAS TOLD THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS (INC) THAT HE WILL HOLD A HEARING ON NORTHERN IRELAND. WE AND THE IRISH EMBASSY HAVE SOUGHT TO DISSUADE HIM. WE HAVE ALSO PROMPTED SENIOR SENATORIAL COLLEAGUES TO DO THE SAME. HATCH SEEMS TO WANT TO FIND A WAY OUT. THE IRISH HAVE INVITED HIM TO VISIT DUBLIN. I SHALL SEE HIM NEXT WEEK. IF HE BITES ON THE IRISH INVITATION, I SHOULD LIKE TO INVITE HIM TO BELFAST.

DETAIL.

2. TWO MEMBERS OF MY STAFF CALLED ON SENATOR ORRIN HATCH (REPUBLICAN-UTAH) YESTERDAY. HATCH EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD GIVEN A COMMITMENT TO THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS TO HOLD A HEARING ON NORTHERN IRELAND. THIS WOULD BE IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTION SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE AND WOULD PROBABLY TAKE THE FORM OF A HEARING ON COMPARATIVE POLITICAL SYSTEMS IN THE US AND NORTHERN IRELAND. HATCH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND WHEN HE GAVE THE COMMITMENT. HE BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THERE IS A CASE FOR SOME ASPECTS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION TO BE AIRED. AT THE SAME TIME HE WOULD ENSURE THAT HEARINGS WERE BALANCED. HE ASSURED US OF THE STRENGTH OF HIS VIEWS ON TERRORISM.

3. WE (AND THE IRISH EMBASSY, WHO ALSO MET THE SENATOR YESTERDAY) ARGUED THAT A HEARING WOULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE, WOULD BE REGARDED AS PROVOCATIVE IN THE UK AND THE REPUBLIC AND MIGHT COMPLICATE THE TASK OF THOSE DIRECTLY CONCERNED. HATCH TOOK THESE POINTS BUT STRESSED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO GO BACK ON HIS COMMITMENT TO THE INC. HE SEEMED TO BE LOOKING FOR AN HONOURABLE ALTERNATIVE. THE IRISH EMBASSY PROPOSED THAT HE SHOULD VISIT IRELAND INSTEAD. HATCH SEEMED INTERESTED.

4. WE HAVE ALERTED THE STAFFS OF SENATORS BAKER (SENATE MAJORITY LEADER), LUGAR (CHAIRMAN, EUROPE SUB-COMMITTEE, FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE), KENNEDY AND BIDEN (THE LAST 2 MUCH INVOLVED IN IRISH-AMERICAN ISSUES AND MINORITY MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE). THEY HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO BRIEF THEIR PRINCIPALS TO ADVISE HATCH TO DROP HIS PROPOSAL. SENATOR BAKER'S STAFF WERE

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/ REASONABLY

REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THEY COULD KILL THE IDEA. WE HAVE ALSO BRIEFED THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ARE AWARE OF HATCH'S PROPOSAL.

5. THE ACTION TAKEN SO FAR HAS SERVED TO SOW DOUBTS IN HATCH'S MIND. ADVICE FROM HIS COLLEAGUES MAY FURTHER THAT PROCESS. HATCH IS BASICALLY WELL-INTENTIONED TOWARDS US BUT IS, HOWEVER, SOMETHING OF AN ACTIVIST AND A MAVERICK. AN ADDITIONAL ASPECT TO THE PROBLEM IS THAT ONE OF THE INC OFFICIALS WHO APPROACHED HIM CLAIMED TO BE A MORMON LIKE THE SENATOR HIMSELF. THAT LAYER OF PERSONAL COMMITMENT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. IN ORDER TO REINFORCE OUR CONCERN I AM ARRANGING TO CALL ON HATCH MYSELF NEXT WEEK. IF HE SEEMS INTERESTED IN TAKING UP THE INVITATION TO VISIT THE REPUBLIC, I THINK IT WOULD BE RIGHT TO SUGGEST A VISIT TO BELFAST. I HAVE ALSO ASKED OUR CONSUL-GENERAL IN LOS ANGELES, WHO COVERS UTAH, TO BRIEF LOCAL CONTACTS IN SUITABLE TERMS.

6. OUR AIM IN ALL THIS IS, IF POSSIBLE, TO AVOID A HEARING ALTOGETHER. BUT AT THE VERY LEAST WE AND THE IRISH EMBASSY HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO STAY THE SENATOR'S HAND UNTIL AFTER NOVEMBER (THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS HERE AND THE ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT). BETWEEN NOW AND THEN CONGRESSIONAL ACTION OF THIS KIND ON NORTHERN IRELAND COULD HAVE DAMAGING REPERCUSSIONS. EVEN IF HATCH HIMSELF WOULD PREFER TO TAKE A LOW PROFILE, THAT WILL NOT BE THE OBJECTIVE OF THE INC AND THE OTHER EXTREMISTS.

7. WHEN I SEE HATCH NEXT WEEK, I SHOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO SAY SOMETHING, AT IN GENERAL TERMS, ABOUT THE CURRENT STATE OF ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS FOLLOWING THE PRIME MINISTERS MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH ON 3 SEPTEMBER AND ABOUT THE PREPARATIONS FOR THEIR MEETING IN NOVEMBER. THE IRISH EMBASSY ARE MAKING MUCH USE ON THE HILL OF SUCH PHRASES AS 'THE CURRENT MOMENTUM IN ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS' AND 'PROCESSES ALREADY UNDERWAY'. WE NEED A LINE OF OUR OWN WHICH ELABORATES ON THE APPROACH IN MR PRIOR'S SPEECH IN THE HOUSE ON 2 JULY.

WRIGHT

NORTHERN IRELAND

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PS/MR WHITNEY
PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS
SIR W HARDING
MR GOODALL
MR BARRINGTON
MR O'NEILL
MR JENKINS
MR D C THOMAS
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FILE

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR A DUFF

The Prime Minister was most grateful for your minute of 31 August about possible links between NATO (or the United States) intelligence authorities and the Irish Republic. This seems to dispose pretty thoroughly of the story which she had heard.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C.D. Powell
3 September, 1984

S E C R E T

30

IMMEDIATE

PS (6)
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MS WHITNEY

PS/S. C. S
PS/ MR. R. ANDREW
OAB 1/56

PS/PCS

MS SPENDLY

~~MS J. BROWN~~

MS ANGE

MS JENKINS

J. LYON
~~MS BOTS-EMITE~~



ED/RID

SIR E ARMSTRONG

ED/FOED (2)

DIO

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ED/NEWS D

PS/No 10 DOWNING STREET (3)

CONFIDENTIAL

FM DUBLIN D11155Z SEPT 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 427 OF 1 SEPTEMBER 1984
INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST) NIO (LONDON)

VISIT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND TO DUBLIN
ON 31 AUGUST

SUMMARY

1. DURING A VERY CORDIAL EVENING MR PRIOR ATTEMPTED TO MAKE IRISH MINISTERS' EXPECTATIONS FROM HMG MORE REALISTIC.

DETAIL

2. IN A NOTABLY FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE, THE TAOISEACH AND THE IRISH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPENT NEARLY THE WHOLE OF A FOUR HOUR MEETING OVER DINNER ON THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. MR PRIOR GAVE A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CONTACTS HE HAD HAD WITH THE LEADERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARTIES IN THE NORTH. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THESE HAD NOT GOT VERY FAR AND THAT HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE RESULTS OF INTER-PARTY TALKS. HE STRESSED THAT THE PRINCIPAL AIM OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS TO FIND A WAY IN WHICH THE MINORITY COMMUNITY COULD BE ASSOCIATED WITH DECISION MAKING IN THE NORTH. HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE ARRANGEMENTS OF 1974 COULD BE REPEATED, AND AT ONE POINT HE REJECTED THE IDEA OF A NOMINATED EXECUTIVE DRAWN FROM THE PARTIES. THE IRISH SIDE PUT FORWARD NO CLEAR IDEAS ON THIS TOPIC AND WENT LITTLE FURTHER THAN REPEATING THE SLOGAN OF POWER SHARING. THERE WAS RATHER A SHARP

EXCHANGE BETWEEN MYSELF AND MR BARRY WHEN I SAID THAT I DID NOT THINK IT WAS REASONABLE OF HIM TO COMPLAIN IN A RECENT SPEECH THAT THERE WAS NO DEMOCRACY IN THE NORTH, GIVEN THAT THE SDLP HAD BOYCOTTED THE ASSEMBLY AND HAD DONE SO WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF A DUBLIN GOVERNMENT, THOUGH NOT THAT OF DR FITZGERALD. HE WAS INSISTENT THAT THE ASSEMBLY WAS NOT A SUITABLE BODY FOR THE SDLP. THE IRISH MINISTERS MADE IT CLEAR THAT ANY ARRANGEMENTS WE MADE WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THEM AND THE SDLP JOINTLY. THEY COULD THEN REINFORCE EACH OTHER IN SELLING THEM TO THEIR PUBLIC. APART PERHAPS FROM MALLON, THEY THOUGHT THE PARTY WOULD STICK TOGETHER. THEY CONSIDERED THAT IT WAS UP TO HMG TO DELIVER THE UNIONISTS. MR PRIOR STRESSED THAT THIS WAS NOT IN OUR POWER.

3. THEY WERE NOT PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN A PARLIAMENTARY TIER AND SAID THEY HAD DIFFICULTY IN SEEING A USEFUL JOB FOR IT.

4. THEY WERE CONCERNED LEST DOMESTIC PROBLEMS IN THE UK, SUCH AS THE MINERS STRIKE, SHOULD DEFLECT MINISTERIAL INTEREST AWAY FROM ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS.

5. MINISTERS DID NOT DISCUSS COMMUNITY BUSINESS, INCURSIONS INTO THE REPUBLIC OR BORDER CROSSINGS.

6. RESIDENT CLERK PLEASE INFORM CLARK, RID, OF RECEIPT OF THIS TELEGRAM AND OF MY 3 MIFTS.

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DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1287</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract/Item details: <i>Duff to Powell dated 31 August 1984</i>	
CLOSED FOR YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
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hlo JSM
cc PC 13

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 August 1984

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister has read Mr Prior's minute of 14 August commenting on the Irish Government ideas on policing. The Prime Minister assumes that these comments will be fully reflected in the briefing for the meeting with Dr FitzGerald on 3 September.

I am sending copies of this letter to Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C D Powell

Graham Sandiford, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office

SECRET AND PERSONAL

SMH



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 August 1984

Thank you for your letter PUS/L/961 of 10 August about the line which your Department proposes to take about the Northern Ireland Secretary's visit to Mr Barry in Dublin on 31 August.

The Prime Minister has now seen your letter and agrees the line.

I am sending copies of this letter to Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office) and David Goodall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

C D Powell

R J Andrew, Esq., CB
Northern Ireland Office

SR

GRS 430
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FM WASHINGTON 282206Z AUG 84
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2540 DATED 28 AUGUST
INFO NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK, CG NEW YORK.
INFO SAVING OTHER CG'S IN USA.

MY TELNO 2452: GALVIN INCIDENT, BELFAST, 12 AUGUST.

SUMMARY.

1. BIAGGI TO HOLD A 'HEARING' ON THE RECENT NORAID VISIT.
LOW-KEY APPROACH ADVISED.

DETAIL.

2. CONGRESSMAN MARIO BIAGGI HAS WRITTEN TO INFORM ME THAT HIS AD HOC COMMITTEE ON IRISH AFFAIRS WILL HOLD A HEARING ON 6 SEPTEMBER TO REVIEW 'THE RECENT VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND'. ALTHOUGH BIAGGI DOES NOT MENTION NORAID, GALVIN IS BILLED AS A WITNESS. BIAGGI INTENDS TO READ INTO THE RECORD MY LETTER TO HIM OF 6 AUGUST FOLLOWING HIS PROTEST AGAINST THE HOME SECRETARY'S EXCLUSION ORDER. BIAGGI GOES ON TO SAY THAT HE WOULD WELCOME ANY FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS FROM US WHICH COULD BE PRESENTED AT THE HEARING.

3. BIAGGI'S COMMITTEE HAS NO FORMAL STANDING. ALTHOUGH HE CLAIMS A MEMBERSHIP OF OVER 100, HE CAN GENERALLY COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF ONLY A DOZEN OR SO MEMBERS FOR HIS INITIATIVES. MEETINGS ORGANISED BY BIAGGI OR THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS ARE GENERALLY NOT WELL ATTENDED. BIAGGI HAS NOT RECENTLY HELD A 'HEARING'. HE HELD A 'SPECIAL MEETING' IN JUNE 1982 ON PLASTIC BATON ROUNDS. IT DID NOT ATTRACT MUCH PUBLICITY.

4. BIAGGI, NORAID AND OTHERS WILL NO DOUBT TRY TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE 'HEARING'. CONGRESS IS STILL THIS WEEK IN RECESS AND OUR NORMAL CONTACTS IN THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND'S OFFICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE. BUT IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY WOULD WISH TO PLAY THIS IN A LOW KEY. THERE IS NO LOVE LOST BETWEEN BIAGGI AND THE MORE MODERATE IRISH-AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP. THE IRISH EMBASSY SHARE OUR VIEW THAT WE SHOULD DO NOTHING TO DRAMATISE OR DIGNIFY THIS DEVELOPMENT. NEITHER WE NOR THE

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IRISH EMBASSY INTEND TO BE REPRESENTED AT THE HEARING. BIAGGI WILL BE INVITING STATE DEPARTMENT TESTIMONY. IT IS, HOWEVER, UNLIKELY THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WILL AGREE FORMALLY TO APPEAR, ALTHOUGH THEY MIGHT SEND THE DESK OFFICER TO WATCH THE PROCEEDINGS. I INTEND TO SEND A BRIEF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO BIAGGI, NOTING HIS INTENTION TO READ INTO THE RECORD MY LETTER TO HIM ABOUT GALVIN'S EXCLUSION BUT DECLINING HIS INVITATION TO PRESENT ANY FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS.

5. WE HAVE NOT SO FAR RECEIVED ANY PRESS ENQUIRIES. IF WE DO, WE PROPOSE TO TAKE THE LINE THAT BIAGGI'S COMMITTEE HAS NO FORMAL STANDING AND THAT WE SHALL NOT BE REPRESENTED AT THE SO-CALLED HEARING. WE SHALL EXPRESS REGRET THAT BIAGGI IS PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR GALVIN.

6. PLEASE ADVANCE TO CLARK (RID) AND HILL (NIO (L)).

HANNAY

(ADVANCED AS REQUESTED)

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MR JENKINS
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Minister of State

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
STORMONT CASTLE
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Tel. Belfast (0232) 63011
Telex 74272

The Rt Hon Sir Michael Havers QC MP
Attorney General
Royal Courts of Justice
LONDON
WC2A 2LL

N
29/2
28 August 1984

Dear Michael,

DELAYS IN COMING TO TRIAL

I am writing in Jim Prior's absence on leave to thank you for your letter of 31 July. ^{will request if required} He is grateful for your support.

Jim appreciates your concern that we should not compound our present security problems by allowing a major shift of scheduled cases away from the Crumlin Road Courthouse. Its secure communications with Belfast prison make it the inevitable choice for these cases, and as you say, if it is over-congested, the cases to be moved elsewhere should prima facie be the non-scheduled jury ones. We simply felt that Sir George Baker had a point that the statutory limitation of scheduled cases to the Crumlin Road Courthouse was unduly inflexible, and that the authorities ought to have the opportunity of moving a scheduled case elsewhere, however rarely. But the Chief Constable has made the point, like yourself, that we must not let this cause us fresh security problems.

With regard to speed in processing cases, my officials are in discussion with the Director about his staffing needs. They are looking at them sympathetically, and I hope that it will be possible to satisfy them, though you will realise that we must work within the general constraints of Government policy with regard to public expenditure and Civil Service numbers. I am sure that you and the Director will have noted that it was part of the same conclusion of the Working Group that he and the police should examine whether there is any scope for reducing

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time scales by alterations in administration or management; this is, of course, where possible, an alternative route to the same end as the recruitment of additional staff.

I realise that more silks will not axiomatically bring about an effectively larger Criminal Bar, still less a more rational distribution of briefs amongst its members by solicitors. But I feel that the least that we can do is encourage that to take place by all practical means.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary, the Scottish Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours truly
Adam
ADAM BUTLER

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28 AUG 1984

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/VR WHITNEY

PS/PDS

~~SIR B ARMSTRONG~~

VE JENKINS

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PS/S. O. S
PS/ MR R. ANDREW
OAB 1/56

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J. LYON
~~VE BEECHMAN~~

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SIR B ARMSTRONG

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PS/No 10 DOWNING STREET (3)

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ADVANCE COPY

GRS 420
RESTRICTED
FM DUBLIN 281440Z AUG 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 416 OF 28 AUGUST 1984
INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (LONDON) NIO (BELFAST)

MY TELNO 414: IRISH GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS

SUMMARY

1. MR BARRY IS REPORTED BY THE PRESS AS SPEAKING AGAIN ON 27 AUGUST ON NORTHERN IRELAND. HE SAID THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HOPED THE ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT WOULD BE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD, AND THAT ANYTHING LESS WOULD NOT SATISFY THEM.

DETAIL

2. TODAY'S 'IRISH TIMES' REPORTS MR BARRY AS SAYING THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD BE HELD BEFORE DECEMBER, AND QUOTES HIM AS FOLLOWS:

'THE INDICATIONS THROUGH THE CIVIL SERVICE CHANNEL ARE THAT MRS THATCHER IS RECEIVING BETTER ADVICE THAN SHE HAD BEEN GETTING UP 'TILL NOW. I WOULD SAY THAT NORTHERN IRELAND HAS BEEN MOVED UP A NOTCH ON HER AGENDA, THAT'S NOT HIGH ENOUGH FOR ME PERSONALLY, BUT AT LEAST WE ARE HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS FROM MY DISCUSSIONS WITH JIM PRIOR AND GEOFFREY HOWE THAT THERE IS A NEW ACCEPTANCE OF THE SENSE OF URGENCY ABOUT THE PRESENT SITUATION.

OF THE SENSE OF URGENCY ABOUT THE PRESENT SITUATION.

"I BELIEVE THAT LAST YEAR'S LONDON SUMMIT HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT ON MRS THATCHER'S THINKING, SO MUCH SO THAT BOTH SHE AND HER CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE BEEN PAYING THE PROBLEM OF NORTHERN IRELAND MORE ATTENTION. AS REGARDS THE SUMMIT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE LOOKING FOR A MAJOR STEP FORWARD, ANYTHING LESS THAN THAT WOULD NOT SATISFY US AND WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF FAILING TO HALT THE ALIENATION WHICH IS BEING FELT INCREASINGLY BY THE NATIONALISTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. BUT WHILE WE ARE ANXIOUS FOR A RESPONSE WE DO NOT WANT A RUSHED RESPONSE OR SOMETHING THAT WOULD MERELY TINKER WITH THE SYSTEM AS IT EXISTS NOW - THAT WOULDN'T SATISFY US. WE PRESENTED THEM WITH A VERY DETAILED REPORT AND THEY HAVE BEEN GIVING THAT THEIR DETAILED CONSIDERATION."

COMMENT

3. THE DFA TELL US THAT THESE COMMENTS WERE MADE BY MR BARRY IN AN "INFORMAL" TALK (OR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW) WITH THE REPORTER. WE NEED NOT REGARD THEM AS CONSIDERED. BUT THEY INDICATE THE WAY THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ARE BUILDING UP THEIR OWN EXPECTATIONS OF US AND THOSE OF THE IRISH PUBLIC.

GOODISON

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SENT/RECD 281515Z GC/MJM

GRS540
UNCLASSIFIED
FM DUBLIN 271615Z AUG 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 414 OF 27 AUGUST 1984
INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (L) NIO (B)

IRISH GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS ON NORTHERN IRELAND

SUMMARY

1. SPEECHES MADE BY TWO SENIOR IRISH GOVERNMENT MINISTERS THIS WEEKEND ARE BEING INTERPRETED AS INDICATING THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS STEPPING UP PRESSURE ON HMG FOR AN INITIATIVE IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

DETAIL

2. IN A TOUGH SPEECH ON SATURDAY, MR BARRY SAID THAT HMG MUST MATCH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT, AS EVIDENCED BY THE FORUM REPORT, TO WORK FOR PEACE. "REAL DEMOCRACY" DID NOT EXIST IN NORTHERN IRELAND, SINCE THAT WOULD "REQUIRE STRUCTURES WHICH FULLY ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACCOMMODATE THE FUNDAMENTAL DIVISIONS OF THE COMMUNITY. THE ABSENCE OF REAL DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES HAS CREATED AND NURTURED TODAY'S DANGEROUS ALIENATION". THE TWO GOVERNMENTS MUST NOW CREATE CONDITIONS IN THE NORTH IN WHICH DEMOCRACY COULD GROW AND FLOURISH. WORKING TOGETHER THEY COULD BRIDGE THE GULF BETWEEN THE TWO TRADITIONS.

3. THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, MR NOONAN, SAID ON SATURDAY THAT THE INDICATIONS WERE THAT LONDON HAD COME TO SHARE A SENSE OF URGENCY OVER THE NORTH WHICH, TOGETHER WITH "THE EMERGING COMMON ANALYSIS OF MAJOR ASPECTS OF THE CRISIS CAN BE, AND MUST BE, TRANSFORMED INTO A MAJOR ANGLO-IRISH INITIATIVE". NOONAN SAID THAT THE FORUM REPORT'S ASSERTION OF THE IRREDUCIBLE REQUIREMENTS OF A NEW IRELAND OFFERED THE BEST HOPE SO FAR OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO TRADITIONS. BOTH GOVERNMENTS SHOULD CREATE STRUCTURES WHICH WOULD ACCOMMODATE AS EQUALS THE TWO IDENTITIES. LONDON AND DUBLIN MUST PROVIDE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH WHAT THEY NEEDED, NOT WHAT THE IRISH OR THE BRITISH WOULD LIKE.

4. THE IRISH TIMES REPORT GOES ON TO SAY THAT:
"A BRITISH RESPONSE, WHICH MAY TAKE THE FORM OF A LENGTHY REPLY TO THE FORUM REPORT, FOLLOWED BY DETAILED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN BOTH GOVERNMENTS AND CULMINATING IN A SUMMIT MEETING BETWEEN MRS THATCHER AND THE TAOISEACH IS BEING PREPARED IN LONDON. ALREADY THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN TOP-RANKING OFFICIALS IN LONDON AND DUBLIN ALTHOUGH NO FORMAL TALKS HAVE BEEN HELD AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL".

5. THE IRISH INDEPENDENT COMMENTS THAT

'MR BARRY'S SPEECH... WILL RAISE HACKLES IN THE NORTH, BUT THIS IS AN EASY FEAT TO ACHIEVE AT ANY TIME. NEVERTHELESS, TOUGH COMMENTS FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARE NOT DELIVERED OFF-THE -CUFF. THEY ARE THE RESULT OF CAREFUL CONSIDERATION AND MUST HAVE THE APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE''.

THE TIMES SAYS:

'HALF A CENTURY AGO FIANNA FAIL STOLE THE SEPARATE GARMENTS OF WHAT WAS THEN CUMANN NA GAEL. MR BARRY IS CAREFULLY PREPARING FINE GAEL DEFENCES AGAINST ANY SUCH LARCENY TODAY AS WELL AS LAYING DOWN SOME OBVIOUS PLANTS FOR ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH BRITAIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE''.

6. FULL TEXTS OF BOTH SPEECHES FOLLOW BY BAG TO RID AND NIO (LONDON AND BELFAST).

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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 August 1984

file RFJ
to NIO
Sally Young
H/S
Lord Pres
Pres

Dear Mr Kinnoch,

Thank you for your letter about the violence which attended Mr. Galvin's recent appearance in Northern Ireland.

First, may I say that further death and injury in Northern Ireland is a cause of sadness whatever the circumstances. Second, I should like to express again my support for the RUC (two of whose officers died from terrorist murder on 12 August) in their difficult task.

Mr. Galvin is Publicity Director of NORAIID, which has rightly been described by an American court as an agent of the IRA. In his last visit to Northern Ireland, in April of this year, Mr. Galvin made a public speech in which he said he was "encouraged" by the IRA's murder of a British soldier which had taken place the previous evening. On learning that Mr. Galvin intended to lead a NORAIID group to Northern Ireland last week, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland asked the Home Secretary to consider exercising his power under the Immigration Act 1971 to prohibit the entry of a person whose exclusion is, in the words of the Act, "conducive to the public good". After considering the views of his colleagues the Home Secretary decided that it was appropriate for him to make an order excluding Mr. Galvin from the United Kingdom. Mr. Galvin was informed that the order had been made.

/I see

I see no purpose in an independent inquiry into the decision to exclude Mr. Galvin from the United Kingdom. The facts are already publicly available. Whether people should be free to come here from abroad against the background which I have indicated may be a matter for argument but will not be resolved by an inquiry.

You also suggest an independent inquiry into the police action on 12 August. The police have a duty to investigate the death of Mr. Downes and to submit a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who will decide whether criminal proceedings are appropriate. Other allegations which might lead to criminal proceedings, if substantiated, must be similarly investigated. The Chief Constable of the RUC has appointed the Deputy Chief Constable with a team of officers to conduct an inquiry into these matters and other aspects of the police operation on 12 August. You will have seen that a preliminary report has already been received and that the Chief Constable is in touch with H.M. Inspectorate of Constabulary who will advise on the inquiry, and monitor its progress.

Since you released your letter to the press, I am also publishing this reply.

Yours sincerely,
David Barclay

Approved by the Prime Minister and
signed in her absence.

The Right Honourable Neil Kinnock, M.P.

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PROPOSED DRAFT REPLY TO MR KINNOCK

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER ABOUT THE VIOLENCE WHICH ATTENDED MR GALVIN'S RECENT APPEARANCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

FIRST, MAY I SAY THAT FURTHER DEATH AND INJURY IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS A CAUSE OF SADNESS WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

SECOND, I SHOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS AGAIN MY SUPPORT FOR THE RUC (TWO OF WHOSE OFFICERS DIED FROM TERRORIST MURDER ON 12 AUGUST) IN THEIR DIFFICULT TASK.

MR GALVIN IS PUBLICITY DIRECTOR OF NORAIID, WHICH HAS RIGHTLY BEEN DESCRIBED BY AN AMERICAN COURT AS AN AGENT OF THE IRA. IN HIS LAST VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND, IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR, MR GALVIN MADE A PUBLIC SPEECH IN WHICH HE SAID HE WAS 'ENCOURAGED' BY THE IRA'S MURDER OF A BRITISH SOLDIER WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE THE PREVIOUS EVENING. ON LEARNING THAT MR GALVIN INTENDED TO LEAD A NORAIID GROUP TO NORTHERN IRELAND LAST WEEK, THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND ASKED THE HOME SECRETARY TO CONSIDER EXERCISING HIS POWER UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ACT 1971 TO PROHIBIT THE ENTRY OF A PERSON WHOSE EXCLUSION [NOTE UNDERLINE 'EXCLUSION'] IS, IN THE WORDS OF THE ACT, 'CONDUCTIVE TO THE PUBLIC GOOD'. AFTER CONSIDERING THE VIEWS OF HIS COLLEAGUES THE HOME SECRETARY DECIDED THAT IT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO MAKE AN ORDER EXCLUDING MR GALVIN FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM. MR GALVIN WAS INFORMED THAT THE ORDER HAD BEEN MADE.

I SEE NO PURPOSE IN AN INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY INTO THE DECISION TO EXCLUDE MR GALVIN FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM. THE FACTS ARE ALREADY PUBLICLY AVAILABLE. WHETHER PEOPLE SHOULD BE FREE TO COME HERE FROM ABROAD AGAINST THE BACKGROUND WHICH I HAVE INDICATED MAY BE A MATTER FOR ARGUMENT BUT WILL NOT BE RESOLVED BY AN INQUIRY.

YOU ALSO SUGGEST AN INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY INTO THE POLICE ACTION ON 12 AUGUST. THE POLICE HAVE A DUTY TO INVESTIGATE THE DEATH OF MR DOWNES AND TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS, WHO WILL DECIDE WHETHER CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS ARE APPROPRIATE. OTHER ALLEGATIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS, IF SUBSTANTIATED, MUST BE SIMILARLY INVESTIGATED. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF THE RUC HAS APPOINTED THE DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE WITH A TEAM OF OFFICERS TO CONDUCT AN ENQUIRY INTO THESE MATTERS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE POLICE OPERATION ON 12 AUGUST. YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THAT A PRELIMINARY REPORT HAS ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED AND THAT THE CHIEF CONSTABLE IS IN TOUCH WITH H. M. INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY WHO WILL ADVISE ON THE ENQUIRY, AND MONITOR ITS PROGRESS.

SINCE YOU RELEASED YOUR LETTER TO THE PRESS, I AM ALSO PUBLISHING THIS REPLY.

END OF MESSAGE

*Approved by PM and signed
in her absence.*

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE

<p>To</p> <p>The Rt Hon Neil Kinnock MP</p> <p>(Full Postal Address)</p>	<p>Enclosures</p>	<p>Copies to be sent to</p> <p>Lord President</p> <p>Home Secretary</p> <p>Secretary of State for Northern Ireland</p> <p>Minister of State, FCO</p> <p>Sir Robert Armstrong</p> <p>(Full Address, if Necessary)</p>
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LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY PRIME MINISTER

(Name of Signatory)

Thank you for your public letter about the violence which attended Mr Galvin's recent appearance in Northern Ireland.

I feel compelled
I should like
My ~~immediate~~ *comments* are first to express sadness at *death* and injury in Northern Ireland, whatever the circumstances; secondly to express again my support for the RUC (two of whose officers died from terrorist murder on 12 August) in their difficult task; and thirdly to express contempt for *the way in which the IRA and their supporters* ~~those who~~ organise ~~and~~ manipulate personal tragedy for ~~political purposes~~ *to further their own ends* ~~for political purposes~~.

Mr Galvin is Publicity Director of NORAID, which has rightly been described by an American court as an agent of the IRA. In his last visit to Northern Ireland, in April of this year, Mr Galvin made a public speech in which he said he was "encouraged" by the IRA's murder of a British soldier which had taken place the previous evening. On learning that Mr Galvin intended to lead a NORAID group to Northern Ireland last week, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland asked the Home Secretary to consider exercising his power under the Immigration Act 1971 to prohibit the entry of a person whose exclusion

is, in the words of the Act, "conducive to the public good". After considering the views of his colleagues, the Home Secretary decided that it was appropriate for him to make an order so directing Mr Galvin's exclusion from the United Kingdom, and Mr Galvin was informed that the order had been made.

I see no purpose in an independent inquiry into the decision to exclude Mr Galvin from the United Kingdom. The facts are already publicly available. Whether people should be free to come here from abroad to encourage the murder of British soldiers and other citizens may be a matter for argument but will not be resolved by an inquiry. Those who wish to criticise the decision are free to do so, making full use of hindsight.

You also suggest an independent inquiry into the police action on 12 August. The police have a duty to investigate the death of Mr Downes and to submit a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who will decide whether criminal proceedings are appropriate. Other allegations which might lead to criminal proceedings, if substantiated, must be similarly investigated. The Chief Constable of the RUC has appointed the Deputy Chief Constable with a team of officers to conduct an inquiry into these matters and other aspects of the police operation on 12 August. You may have noticed from the press that a preliminary report has already been received and that the Chief Constable is in touch with HM Inspector^{ate} of Constabulary who will advise on and monitor the progress of the inquiry.

Since you released your letter to the press, I am also publishing this reply.

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PRIME MINISTER

MR KINNOCK'S LETTER

WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED A DRAFT REPLY TO MR KINNOCK'S LETTER TO YOU ABOUT EVENTS IN BELFAST.

THE TEXT OF MR KINNOCK'S LETTER WAS AS FOLLOWS:

I HAVE DELIBERATELY DELAYED MAKING ANY PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE EVENTS IN WEST BELFAST ON SUNDAY BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT, IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WAS ADVISABLE TO OBTAIN WHATEVER DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT WERE AVAILABLE BEFORE SEEKING ACTION FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT.

HAVING NOW HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER THE MATTER, I MUST ASK YOU TO IMMEDIATELY ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE DECISION TO BAN MARTIN GALVIN FROM NORTHERN IRELAND AND INTO THE INCIDENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE FOLLOWING HIS APPEARANCE IN BELFAST.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THESE TWO RELATED ASPECTS OF THE EVENTS RECEIVE THOROUGH ATTENTION.

THE DECISION TO BAN GALVIN WAS MADE, IT IS REPORTED, BY THE HOME SECRETARY ACTING ON THE ADVICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND. AN ASSESSMENT MUST CLEARLY BE MADE OF THE WISDOM AND THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR JUDGEMENT AND IT WILL ALSO BE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THEIR DECISION WAS MADE WITH OR WITHOUT THE ADVICE OF THE RUC. FURTHER, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO OBTAIN AN EXPLANATION OF THE RUC'S OPERATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THAT DAY AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THE DECISION TO ARREST GALVIN BY ADVANCING THROUGH THE CROWD WAS MADE BEFOREHAND OR WHETHER POLICE COMMANDERS AT THE SCENE MADE AN UNPREPARED RESPONSE OR WHETHER THEY SIMPLY PERMITTED SUCH A RESPONSE TO BE MADE BY LOWER RANKS. I BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL SHARE MY VIEW THAT THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY WAS A RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM THEIR NORMAL PRACTICE IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES OR EVEN IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE PROVOCATION OR THREATS OF ATTACK ON THE POLICE HAVE BEEN MUCH GREATER. IT RESULTED IN THE USE OF AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF FORCE WHICH CAUSED A DEATH AND SEVERE PHYSICAL INJURIES AND IT ALSO GAVE PROPAGANDA MATERIAL TO THOSE IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND ELSEWHERE WHO SUPPORT AND SPONSOR VIOLENCE AND TERROR IN PURSUIT OF THEIR POLITICAL AIMS. THE APPARENT CHANGE IN POLICING METHODS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT CHANGE CLEARLY REQUIRE INVESTIGATION AND IT WILL ALSO BE IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THE RULES ABOUT THE USE OF PLASTIC BULLETS WERE ADHERED TO BY THE RUC.

UNDERSTAND FROM A TELEVISION INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY THAT HE DOES NOT RULE OUT AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY. IN VIEW OF THE DAMAGE WHICH HAS CLEARLY BEEN DONE AS A RESULT OF THE INCIDENT TO RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MINORITY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE RUC AND TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC, I URGE YOU TO DEMONSTRATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF YOUR CONCERN ABOUT THESE MATTERS BY ESTABLISHING THE APPROPRIATE INQUIRY WITHOUT DELAY.

I AM RELEASING THIS LETTER TO THE PRESS.

THE PROPOSED DRAFT REPLY WHICH HAS BEEN CLEARED WITH THE HOME SECRETARY AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY IS AS FOLLOWS:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ~~PUBLIC~~ LETTER ABOUT THE VIOLENCE WHICH ATTENDED MR GALVIN'S RECENT APPEARANCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

~~I FEEL COMPELLED FIRST TO EXPRESS SADNESS AT FURTHER DEATHS AND INJURY IN NORTHERN IRELAND, WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES SEMI COLON SECOND ^{and I should like to} TO EXPRESS AGAIN MY SUPPORT FOR THE RUC (TWO OF WHOSE OFFICERS DIED FROM TERRORIST MURDER ON 12 AUGUST) IN THEIR DIFFICULT TASK. SEMI COLON AND THIRDLY TO EXPRESS CONTEMPT FOR THE WAY IN WHICH THE IRA AND THEIR SUPPORTERS ORGANISE AND MANIPULATE PERSONAL TRAGEDY FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES.~~

MAY I SAY HOW VERY SAD WE ALL ARE

MR GALVIN IS PUBLICITY DIRECTOR OF NORAID, WHICH HAS RIGHTLY BEEN DESCRIBED BY AN AMERICAN COURT AS AN AGENT OF THE IRA. IN HIS LAST VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND, IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR, MR GALVIN MADE A PUBLIC SPEECH IN WHICH HE SAID HE WAS 'ENCOURAGED' BY THE IRA'S MURDER OF A BRITISH SOLDIER WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE THE PREVIOUS EVENING. ON LEARNING THAT MR GALVIN INTENDED TO LEAD A NORAID GROUP TO NORTHERN IRELAND LAST WEEK, THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND ASKED THE HOME SECRETARY TO CONSIDER EXERCISING HIS POWER UNDER THE IMMIGRATION ACT 1971 5= TO PROHIBIT THE ENTRY OF A PERSON WHOSE EXCLUSION IS, IN THE WORDS OF THE ACT, 'CONDUCTIVE TO THE PUBLIC GOOD'. AFTER CONSIDERING THE VIEWS OF HIS COLLEAGUES, THE HOME SECRETARY DECIDED THAT IT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR HIM TO MAKE AN ORDER SO DIRECTING MR GALVIN'S EXCLUSION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND MR GALVIN WAS INFORMED THAT THE ORDER HAD BEEN MADE.

I SEE NO PURPOSE IN AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE DECISION TO EXCLUDE MR GALVIN FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM. THE FACTS ARE ALREADY PUBLICLY AVAILABLE. WHETHER PEOPLE SHOULD BE FREE TO COME HERE FROM ABROAD TO ENCOURAGE THE MURDER OF BRITISH SOLDIERS AND OTHER CITIZENS MAY BE A MATTER FOR ARGUMENT BUT WILL NOT BE RESOLVED BY AN INQUIRY. THOSE WHO WISH TO CRITICISE THE DECISION ARE FREE TO DO SO, MAKING FULL USE OF HINDSIGHT.

YOU ALSO SUGGEST AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE POLICE ACTION ON 12 AUGUST. THE POLICE HAVE A DUTY TO INVESTIGATE THE DEATH OF MR DOWNES AND TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS, WHO WILL DECIDE WHETHER CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS ARE APPROPRIATE. OTHER ALLEGATIONS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS, IF SUBSTANTIATED, MUST BE SIMILARLY INVESTIGATED. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF THE RUC HAS APPOINTED THE DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE WITH A TEAM OF OFFICERS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY INTO THESE MATTERS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE POLICE OPERATION ON 12 AUGUST. YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED FROM THE PRESS THAT A PRELIMINARY REPORT HAS ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED AND THAT THE CHIEF CONSTABLE IS IN TOUCH WITH HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY WHO WILL ADVISE ON AND MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE INQUIRY.

SINCE YOU RELEASED YOUR LETTER TO THE PRESS, I AM ALSO PUBLISHING THIS REPLY.

COMMENT

THE KEY POINT IS IN THE PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH OF THE DRAFT REPLY, WHICH REFERS TO THE INSPECTORATE 'ADVISING AND MONITORING' ON THE PROGRESS OF THE INQUIRY. THE CHIEF CONSTABLE HAS ISSUED A STATEMENT TO THIS EFFECT TODAY (FRIDAY) UNDER STRONG PRESSURE FROM MR PRIOR. HIS DEPARTMENT IS TAKING STEPS TO BRING HOME ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE PRESS.

-THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE THINK THAT IF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE'S STATEMENT SUCCEEDS IN DAMPENING DEMANDS FOR AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY, THERE IS AN ARGUMENT FOR DELAYING YOUR REPLY UNTIL ABOUT MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK. BUT I AM NOT SO SURE. IT COULD EQUALLY BE RIGHT TO REPLY QUICKLY - SAY ON MONDAY - RATHER THAN RISK REVIVING THE STORY AT A LATER DATE. IN EITHER EVENT, I WILL ENSURE THAT MR KINNOCK IS AWARE OF THE TERMS OF YOUR REPLY BEFORE IT IS PUBLISHED.

PERHAPS YOU COULD LET JEAN OR DEBBIE KNOW WHETHER YOU ARE CONTENT WITH THE PROPOSED REPLY, AND WHETHER YOU WOULD PREFER IT TO ISSUE ON MONDAY OR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK. I SHALL BE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS IT.



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

David Barclay Esq
Private Secretary
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

17th August 1984

Jean David,

MR KINNOCK'S LETTER ABOUT MR GALVIN

I attach a draft reply to Mr Kinnock's letter of 14 August to the Prime Minister suggesting an independent public inquiry into both the decision to exclude Mr Galvin and the police operation when he appeared in Belfast.

The suggestion that the decision to exclude Mr Galvin calls for an independent inquiry is relatively easily disposed of. While there may be scope for argument over whether the decision was right, an inquiry is not appropriate and would not resolve or advance the argument. The Secretary of State's remarks to the effect that with hindsight the decision looked like a mistake have been interpreted by the media as meaning that the decision was a mistake. The Prime Minister will not wish to endorse that misinterpretation. Rather than gloss Mr Prior's remarks, it may be better to set out the arguments on the merits of the ban in terms which indicate that the balance is clearly in favour of keeping Mr Galvin out.

The case for an independent inquiry into the police operation to arrest Mr Galvin cannot be so readily dismissed. The Chief Constable has already instructed the Deputy Chief Constable to conduct an inquiry not only into the death of Downes but also into the policing of the parade and the attempt to arrest Galvin. The results in so far as they concern the death of Downes and any other allegations which might lead to criminal proceedings will be reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions in the usual way. The argument that the inquiry should be conducted not by the RUC but by a senior officer from another force or an Inspector of Constabulary is attractive. This would introduce an element of independence without the disadvantages of a full-scale judicial inquiry (presumably under the 1921 Act) which would be excessive, would allow protracted and recriminatory public hearings and would entail exemption from criminal proceedings for those who gave evidence. The difficulty is that the Chief Constable has already announced his own inquiry and is understandably reluctant to change course so soon or indeed to do anything which might undermine the credibility of the inquiry. The relevant legislation

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for Northern Ireland does not contain a power equivalent to that in England and Wales which enables the Secretary of State to insist that an inquiry be held by an Inspector of Constabulary.

The Chief Constable has, however, agreed in principle, that HM Inspectorate should be associated in some way with the inquiry and at the Secretary of State's strong request he has agreed to issue to-day a statement on the following lines:

"The Chief Constable has now studied a preliminary report from the inquiry team on the events of 12 August. He has informed HM Inspectorate of Constabulary of the terms of reference and structure of the inquiry. HM Inspector will advise on and monitor the progress of the inquiry."

The Secretary of State judges that this is as far as the matter can be pressed at present. We are taking steps to ensure that the significance of the statement is appreciated by the press in the hope that the knowledge of the involvement of the Inspectorate will go some way to reduce demands in the Sunday papers for an independent inquiry.

The draft reply to Mr Kinnock makes a reference to the Chief Constable's statement. This procedure avoids the letter becoming the vehicle for announcing the new move; and indeed we would see advantage in the issue of the letter being delayed until, say, the middle of next week. We assume that the Prime Minister's letter will be released to the press.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of Tim Flesher's letter of 14 August. The terms of the proposed reply to Mr Kinnock have been cleared with Mr Prior who is particularly anxious that it should also be agreed with the Home Secretary. The Home Office will be in touch with you direct on this.

*Yours Sincerely
Neil Ward.*

N D WARD

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ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
The Rt Hon Neil Kinnock MP (Full Postal Address)		Lord President Home Secretary Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Minister of State, FCO Sir Robert Armstrong (Full Address, if Necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY PRIME MINISTER

(Name of Signatory)

Thank you for your public letter about the violence which attended Mr Galvin's recent appearance in Northern Ireland.

If I feel compelled
~~My immediate comments are~~ *first to express sadness at* *death and injury*
 in Northern Ireland, whatever the circumstances; secondly to express
 again my support for the RUC (two of whose officers died from terrorist
 murder on 12 August) in their difficult task; and thirdly to express
 contempt for *the way in which the IRA and their supporters* ~~those who~~ *organise and* ~~manipulate~~ *personal tragedy for*
~~political purposes, to further their own ends for~~ *political*
purposes.

Mr Galvin is Publicity Director of NORAID, which has rightly been described by an American court as an agent of the IRA. In his last visit to Northern Ireland, in April of this year, Mr Galvin made a public speech in which he said he was "encouraged" by the IRA's murder of a British soldier which had taken place the previous evening. On learning that Mr Galvin intended to lead a NORAID group to Northern Ireland last week, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland asked the Home Secretary to consider exercising his power under the Immigration Act 1971 to prohibit the entry of a person whose exclusion

is, in the words of the Act, "conducive to the public good". After considering the views of his colleagues, the Home Secretary decided that it was appropriate for him to make an order so directing Mr Galvin's exclusion from the United Kingdom, and Mr Galvin was informed that the order had been made.

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You also suggest an independent inquiry into the police action on 12 August. The police have a duty to investigate the death of Mr Downes and to submit a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who will decide whether criminal proceedings are appropriate. Other allegations which might lead to criminal proceedings, if substantiated, must be similarly investigated. The Chief Constable of the RUC has appointed the Deputy Chief Constable with a team of officers to conduct an inquiry into these matters and other aspects of the police operation on 12 August. You may have noticed from the press that a preliminary report has already been received and that the Chief Constable is in touch with HM Inspector^{ate} of Constabulary who will advise on and monitor the progress of the inquiry.

Since you released your letter to the press, I am also publishing this reply.

17 AUG 1984



[Faint, illegible handwriting]

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Copy No of 7

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Prime Minister
 MW
 CDP CP O/R
 28/8.

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS : NORTHERN IRELAND

I have read with interest Sir Robert Armstrong's account of his meeting with Mr Nally on 30 July. I thought it might be helpful if I let you have some comments before your meeting with Dr FitzGerald on 3 September.

2. The Irish ideas on policing are quite unrealistic. Although John Hume, as well as the Dublin Government, continues to advocate some form of separate police force for the Catholic areas, I am convinced that effective policing in Northern Ireland requires a single police force under the command of the Chief Constable and that we should not go beyond the ideas for joint policing in a border strip which we have already put forward. Apart from West Belfast, the areas of Catholic dominance are small and scattered and do not lend themselves to separate policing, even for "normal" police work. As Sir Robert Armstrong pointed out, unarmed policemen would be easy targets, especially the Catholics who would be seen as traitors by the IRA. Moreover, although the concept of a paramilitary anti-terrorist "third force" may make sense in some countries, it does not in Northern Ireland where terrorism is the dominant preoccupation of all policing: bank robberies and assaults, for example, are frequently perpetrated by terrorists. In any case, to be effective such a force would have to be based essentially on the RUC, which would do little to reduce the alienation of the nationalist majority. Any other solution - such as introducing a large contingent from the Garda - would be likely to provoke both a crisis in the RUC and a strong Protestant backlash.

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3. We all know that the RUC is not perfect and we should certainly do all we can to make it more acceptable to the minority; but in my view it would be a grave mistake to think of dismantling it and starting again. If the news that we were even contemplating such a ~~step~~ were ever to leak out it would have a devastating effect, both within the force and in the Protestant community. The fact is that the maintenance of law and order in Northern Ireland depends very heavily on the RUC, which has now taken over from the Army the primary responsibility for dealing with terrorism. In recent years Protestant terrorism has been largely eliminated, Republican terrorism contained and street violence reduced to occasional, comparatively small eruptions, although as the Galvin episode demonstrates it is still possible to mount a major disruption which the media can exploit to the full. However the improvements that have been made are hard-won and fragile, and should not be put at risk. If the RUC were broken up, or morale collapsed, the effectiveness of the campaign against terrorism would be drastically reduced. There would be an upsurge of violence - probably from both sides - which new and inexperienced police forces of the sort envisaged by the Irish could not possibly cope with. Our only possible recourse in such a situation would be heavier involvement by the British Army.

4. Rather surprisingly, the Irish do not seem to have mentioned the UDR: but since it is even more unpopular with the minority community than the RUC, they undoubtedly envisage that it too should be disbanded. In that case we should risk a violent reaction from the Unionists who, in the absence of the RUC in its present form, would see the UDR as their main protection. Once again, the gap would have to be filled by British Army units from the mainland, which would represent a very heavy commitment.

5. Quite apart from these practical considerations, I believe that there is a strong objection in principle to the control arrangements for the security forces proposed by the Irish. The police in Northern Ireland cannot be made "subordinate" to a Joint Security Commission in any operational sense.

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They must be under the command of the Chief Constable who is himself responsible to the Secretary of State. The latter can certainly consult a Joint Security Commission on which the Irish could be represented; but that does not seem to be what they have in mind. In spite of all our efforts to get across the message that consultation is the most that we are prepared to offer, the Irish still appear to be hankering for joint authority. I note that Mr Nally referred to the Irish Government having a "substantial authority" in the North and in the policing context to "some form of joint authority between the British and Irish Governments". Indeed, I understand _____ suggests that the Irish objective at the meeting on 30 July was to probe our thinking on security matters to see how far we are prepared to go towards joint authority. I hope that when you see Dr FitzGerald on 3 September you will be able finally to remove Irish illusions on this point. I have tried hard to do so with the Irish Ambassador.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

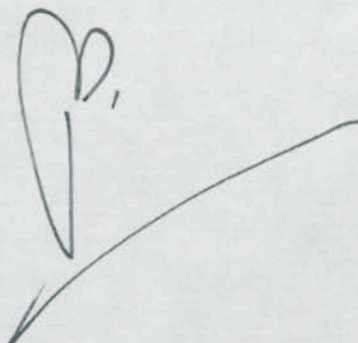
6. Security is the most important and politically sensitive issue in Northern Ireland, and one which impinges directly on sovereignty. By offering Dublin institutionalised consultation on a wide range of matters, including security, we already risk a Protestant reaction which may prevent Unionist participation in any system of devolved government in the North. If we were to go further, particularly in this sensitive area, the consequences could be very serious. The Irish, I recognise, see a restructuring of the police primarily as a political move; but for us security considerations must be paramount. In my view it would be extremely dangerous to move towards giving the Irish any form of joint authority on security matters in the hope that this would minimise their demands for a say in the broader political administration of Northern Ireland. There are things which can be done in the policing field to improve co-operation with the South and to reduce the alienation of the nationalist minority in the North; but they have got to be approached slowly and cautiously. I realise that the Irish want a dramatic gesture to justify the amendment of their constitution; but I think this has to be found in the general

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concept of institutionalised consultation (which would include policing), rather than in immediate and radical changes in security arrangements which could only be brought about gradually and after careful study, possibly in a Joint Security Commission. Above all, we should do nothing which would undermine the present effectiveness of the security forces.

7. I am copying this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and to Sir Robert Armstrong.



14 August 1984

N15345 4 XXX 268

PRIOR TAKES RESPONSIBILITY

NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY JAMES PRIOR TODAY TOOK "FULL RESPONSIBILITY" FOR THE MISTAKES HE ADMITTED HAD BEEN MADE IN THE VIOLENT SCENES SURROUNDING THE ATTEMPT TO ARREST NORRAID PUBLICITY DIRECTOR MARTIN GALVIN.

HE ALSO ADMITTED THAT "IN RETROSPECT" THE ATTEMPT TO BAN GALVIN FROM NORTHERN IRELAND COULD HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE.

IN HIS FIRST PUBLIC COMMENTS SINCE SUNDAY'S VIOLENT SCENES IN BELFAST IN WHICH A MAN WAS KILLED, MR PRIOR SAID: "IN RETROSPECT THAT DECISION TO BAN GALVIN'S ENTRY LOOKS A BAD MISTAKE. BUT AT THE TIME IT DID NOT LOOK THAT WAY." 10

"IF THINGS HAD WORKED OUT DIFFERENTLY WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN UNDER JUST AS MUCH CRITICISM IF WE HAD NOT BANNED HIM FROM COMING HERE," HE SAID.

GALVIN "OPENLY SUPPORTED MURDER, VIOLENCE, AND COLLECTED MONEY FOR ARMS TO KILL SOLDIERS AND POLICEMEN," HE SAID.

"WHEN YOU KNOW ALL THAT, DO YOU JUST SIT IDLY BACK AND SAY LET THIS MAN COME AND DO WHAT HE WANTS TO DO?"

"THE ANSWER IS YOU HAVE TO TAKE A JUDGMENT ON THIS MATTER. SOMETIME YOUR JUDGMENT IS CORRECT AND BORNE OUT BY EVENTS, SOMETIMES IT GOES WRONG.

"I HAVE TO SAY IN THIS CASE SOME MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE FOR WHICH I TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY. FULL RESPONSIBILITY MYSELF."

ASKED WHETHER THE EXCLUSION ORDER ON GALVIN WAS A MISTAKE, MR PRIOR SAID THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT RUC CHIEF CONSTABLE SIR JOHN HERMON WOULD BE INQUIRING INTO. ✂

MR PRIOR CUT SHORT HIS HOLIDAY IN HAMPSHIRE TO RETURN TO LONDON AFTER THE DEATH OF 22-YEAR-OLD SEAN DOWNES AT A RALLY MARKING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTRODUCTION OF INTERNMENT. []



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 August 1984

ST) As I foreshadowed on the telephone earlier, the Prime Minister has now received a letter from Mr. Kinnock seeking an independent inquiry into both the decision to exclude Martin Galvin and the incident following his appearance in Belfast on Sunday. I should be grateful if you could provide a draft reply to Mr. Kinnock's letter as soon as possible. Perhaps we might discuss the timing of a reply when I have had a chance to speak to the Prime Minister.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Nigel Pantling (Home Office) and Stuart Eldon (Lady Young's office).

Tim Flesher

Graham Sandiford Esq
Northern Ireland Office.

NK



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Aeldel 14/8
CURVA

The Office of the Leader of
the Opposition

14 August 1984

Dear Pádraig Kirby,

I have deliberately delayed making any public comment on the events in West Belfast on Sunday because I believe that, in the circumstances, it was advisable to obtain whatever details of the incident were available before seeking action from your Government.

Having now had an opportunity to consider the matter, I must ask you to immediately establish an independent inquiry into the decision to ban Martin Galvin from Northern Ireland and into the incidents which took place following his appearance in Belfast.

It is essential that these two related aspects of the events receive thorough attention.

The decision to ban Galvin was made, it is reported, by the Home Secretary acting on the advice of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. An assessment must clearly be made of the wisdom and the practical implications of their judgement and it will also be necessary to establish whether their decision was made with or without the advice of the RUC. Further, it will be necessary to obtain an explanation of the RUC's operational strategy for that day and, in particular, to establish whether the decision to arrest Galvin by advancing through the crowd was made beforehand or whether police commanders at the scene made an unprepared response or whether they simply permitted such a response to be made by lower ranks. I believe that you will share my view that the action taken by the Royal Ulster Constabulary was a radical departure from their normal practice in similar circumstances or even in circumstances where provocation or threats of attack on the police have been much greater. It resulted in the use of an

unacceptable level of force which caused a death and severe physical injuries and it also gave propaganda material to those in Northern Ireland and elsewhere who support and sponsor violence and terror in pursuit of their political aims. The apparent change in policing methods and the consequences of that change clearly require investigation and it will also be important to establish whether the rules about the use of plastic bullets were adhered to by the RUC.

I understand from a television interview given by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland today that he does not rule out an independent inquiry. In view of the damage which has clearly been done as a result of the incident to relations between the minority community in Northern Ireland and the RUC and to the relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Irish Republic, I urge you to demonstrate the seriousness of your concern about these matters by establishing the appropriate inquiry without delay.

I am releasing this letter to the press.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP

PRIME MINISTER FROM TIM FLESHER

BELFAST

THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE INCIDENTS IN BELFAST HAS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND HAS BEEN FUELLED BY MR PRIOR'S DOORSTEP INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE SAID THAT THE DECISION TO EXCLUDE GALVIN LOOKED LIKE A "BAD MISTAKE". HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN MISTAKES FOR WHICH HE TOOK FULL RESPONSIBILITY. THIS ASPECT OF HIS REMARKS HAS BEEN SEIZED ON BY THE MEDIA, MR

PRIOR HAS ALSO SPOKEN TO MR

BARRY WHO IS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED WITH THE MILEAGE WHICH SINN FEIN HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE OUT OF THE INCIDENT. HE CONTINUED TO PRESS MR PRIOR FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY. THIS CALL HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN UP BY MR KINNOCK WHO HAS WRITTEN TO YOU DEMANDING SUCH AN INQUIRY, BOTH INTO THE EXCLUSION OF GALVIN AND INTO THE RUC TACTICS. I HAVE ASKED NIO TO PRODUCE A DRAFT REPLY WHICH CAN BE TELEXED TO YOU. BUT WE SHALL NEED TO CONSIDER WHETHER SUCH A REPLY NEEDS TO GO QUICKLY, IE IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS, OR WHETHER BY DOING SO WE WOULD SIMPLY FUEL INTEREST. IT MAY BE BETTER TO LEAVE A REPLY FOR A WEEK OR SO.

THE ISSUES WHICH THE MEDIA HAVE IDENTIFIED ARE:

1. WAS THE EXCLUSION ORDER A MISTAKE?

MR. PRIOR SEEMS TO HAVE ADMITTED THIS (ALTHOUGH I AM NOT SURE WHY).

2. WHY DID THE RUC SEEMINGLY ABANDON THEIR NORMALLY RESTRAINED TACTICS AND WILL THERE BE A PUBLIC INQUIRY?

SIR JOHN HERMANN HAS ALREADY SAID THAT THERE WILL BE AN INTERNAL INQUIRY INTO THIS AND MR PRIOR FEELS THAT THIS HAS PRE EMPTED ANY MOVE SUCH AS DRAFTING IN A CHIEF CONSTABLE FROM THE MAINLAND. EQUALLY HOWEVER HE HAS SAID IN HIS INTERVIEW TODAY THAT HE "DID NOT RULE OUT A PUBLIC INQUIRY". WE SHALL HAVE TO SEE WHAT LINE NIO PROPOSE.

END OF MESSAGE
14 AUGUST 1984

CONFIDENTIAL

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Permanent Under Secretary
R J Andrew CB

PUS/L/961

Charles Powell Esq
No 10
Downing Street
London

Prime Minister
Agree proposed press line
on Mr. Prior's visit to
Dublin?
CDP
20/8.
MS

10 August 1984

Dear Charles,

I understand from Robert Armstrong that the Prime Minister would like to see the terms of the line we propose to take about the Secretary of State's visit to Mr Barry in Dublin on 31 August.

As in the case of previous meetings between the two Ministers, this one would not be announced beforehand. When it has taken place we would intend issuing a very brief non-committal statement on the same lines as on earlier occasions. This would say no more than that the Ministers met in Dublin on 31 August and that matters of common interest were discussed. The Irish have in the past kept to agreements not to speculate or comment on what was said at meetings between Mr Prior and Mr Barry.

In this case there is bound to be press speculation about the meeting and its timing. Whatever we say or do not say, it will no doubt be interpreted as a farewell visit. Bearing in mind Mr Prior's reference in his speech in the debate on the Forum Report to talks with the Irish Government, some commentators will probably see it as heralding a fresh initiative, to be followed up at the Prime Minister's meeting with the Taoiseach on 3 September.

We would want to avoid both implications, particularly the latter. Accordingly, we propose to brief press officers to say:

- i) the meeting was the 8th such meeting between Mr Prior and Mr Barry;
- ii) it was entirely informal and there was no set agenda;
- iii) a wide range of subjects was discussed; but, in common with all previous such meetings, we and the Irish have agreed that it would not be helpful to list them;
- iv) no significance should be read into the timing of the visit; it came at the end of the holiday

CONFIDENTIAL

/...



period when it would be natural for Mr Prior and Mr Barry to take stock. (Mr Prior's personal position is of course well known in Dublin and since Mr Prior and Mr Barry have established a personal rapport it would not be surprising if some reference was made to it).

- v) The meeting was in no way related to the European Community meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, due to take place on 3 September. It remains the case, as mentioned by Mr Prior in the Forum Debate on 2 July, that a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach on Anglo-Irish matters is expected to take place before the end of the year.
- vi) Mr Prior made it plain in the debate on 2 July that there would be talks with the Irish Government about Northern Ireland. But this particular meeting did not herald any dramatic new development in Anglo-Irish relations following the Forum Report; it was part of what has become a regular series of informal meetings. It was a useful and friendly occasion.

If the Prime Minister is content, we will go ahead with the arrangements for the meeting on this basis. We will agree with the Irish that no announcement is to be made about the meeting other than the usual non-committal statement after it has taken place; and we will brief our press officers to handle questions on the lines indicated above.

Noted
ans

Perhaps I might add that following a request from David Barclay I have consulted Mr Prior about attendance at the Prime Minister's meeting with the Taoiseach on 3 September. He agrees that to avoid speculation about the nature of the meeting it would be better if he were not present. He will, of course, report to the Prime Minister anything of significance which emerges from his visit to Dublin.

I am copying this to Robert Armstrong and to David Goodall at the FCO.

Yours ans.

R J ANDREW



Ireland ditto P+17

EAMABU

bc P.C. 11



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

6 August, 1984

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND: VISIT TO DUBLIN

The Prime Minister has considered Sir Robert Armstrong's minute (Ref A084/2246) about the invitation to Mr. Prior to visit Dublin before he leaves office.

The Prime Minister agrees that Mr. Prior should go but wishes very careful attention paid to public handling of the visit. She has commented that it must not be called a farewell visit because other arrangements will still be in the air.

You will wish therefore to devise a line that both avoids reference to a farewell visit and does not give rise to speculation about some new initiative on Irish affairs growing out of the coincidence in time between Mr. Prior's visit to Dublin and the Taoiseach's visit to London. Once such a line has worked out, I suggest that you let me see it to ensure that the Prime Minister is content.

(C.D. Powell)

R. Hatfield, Esq.,
Cabinet Office

File *SPH*
cc PC 10



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

6 August 1984

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister has read with interest Sir Robert Armstrong's account of his further discussions with Mr Nally on 30 July.

The Prime Minister thinks that Irish expectations remain unrealistic, though she notes Sir Robert's judgement that the Taoiseach may be persuaded to look more positively at the possibilities of a consultative role. She thinks that when she sees Dr Fitzgerald on 3 September, she will need to encourage him to give Mr Nally more realistic instructions for the next round of discussions.

On a specific point, the Prime Minister is hesistant about the possibility, mentioned in paragraph 5 of Sir Robert's minute, of moving eventually to the establishment of a separate police force with responsibility for dealing with certain categories of crime. Sir Robert may wish to discuss this further with her if it is intended to pursue the idea with the Irish Government.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign Secretary, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and to Sir Antony Acland, Mr Robert Andrew, Mr David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield.

%eco *OAB NIO* *Lynn E122*
FCO

C D Powell

Richard Hatfield Esq.,
Cabinet Office

est



70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A084/2290

6 August 1984

Dear Robert,

Thank you for your letter of 2 August about the invitation which your Secretary of State has received to visit Dublin before he leaves office.

We discussed this on the telephone. I have now consulted the Prime Minister. She agrees that Mr Prior should go, but wishes very careful attention to be paid to public handling of the visit. She has commented that it is not to be called a farewell visit because other arrangements will still be in the air. She has asked that we should devise a line that both avoids reference to a farewell visit and does not give rise to speculation about some initiative on Irish affairs as a result of the coincidence in time between Mr Prior's visit to Dublin and the Taoiseach's visit to London. The Prime Minister would like to see the line proposed before a commitment is taken on.

This is clearly a difficult and delicate line to find. I think that you will have to say something like that the Secretary of State has accepted Mr Barry's invitation to pay a courtesy visit to Dublin at the end of August; that this visit is in no way linked to the Taoiseach's visit to the Prime Minister on 3 September to discuss European Community affairs; and that it has no other particular significance. No doubt the press will assume that it is in fact a farewell visit, even if we do not actually say so.

Perhaps I could leave you to think further about the line to be followed, and to clear something with 10 Downing Street when a decision has been made.

I am sending a copy of this letter to **Charles Powell**.

Yours ever
Robert

R. J. Andrew Esq CB

Dub 7/8
DB ro 9
note that
N.I.O. will
come forward
with a line.

CDP/12

Speech by the Rt Hon J Enoch Powell, MBE, MP, at the Annual Fete of the Mourne Divisional Association of the South Down Unionist Association at Kilkeel, Co. Down, at 2.30 p.m., Saturday, 4 August 1984.

British Ulster is in greater peril now than it has been since 1912. Agreement has been reached between Her Majesty's Government and the Irish government at official, if not ministerial, level that, before 1984 is out, a parliamentary body will be established on which will be represented the Republic, Great Britain and Northern Ireland. From the establishment of that body it will only be a short step to what Ulster unionists have always rejected and what your grandfathers were ready to resist, if necessary, by force of arms: Ulster members in a Dublin parliament. They knew, and we ought to know, that Ulster representation in a Dublin parliament means the end of the Union, the denial and destruction of Ulster's right to be British.

Let nobody imagine that Ulstermen, and so-called unionists too, would not be found to take up the places offered them on a parliamentary body such as the authors of the New Ireland Forum and the civil servants in the Northern Ireland Office have devised and agreed upon. There are always traitors enough to do the dirty work of Ulster's enemies: you name them, we have them. Some of them have places, whether they sit in them or not, in the Northern Ireland Assembly. That Assembly was brought into existence for no other purpose than to provide a nest where the future representatives of Ulster in a Dublin parliament would be hatched out. The nest has been lined with bribery and kept warm by patronage, and the brood of traitors is there already, with their yellow beaks wide open.

I said that our danger is as great as in 1912. In one respect it is greater. Unionism is divided now as unionism was not divided then. It is divided because a party now exists which has written the Union off and is prepared to do a deal with Dublin over terms for

Ulster in an all-Ireland set-up. How do I know? I know, because that party played along with Mr Secretary Prior in creating the third leg which FitzGerald always said was necessary for the Anglo-Irish stool. "I give Jim Prior full marks" declared the leader of the D.U.P. "Full marks" for what? Ian Paisley is not such a dunce or a dupe not to know what Jim Prior and the Northern Ireland Office have been about during these past three years - yes, and Humphrey Atkins and the Northern Ireland Office before that.

Take no notice of those who protest to high heaven that they will never join an Anglo-Irish parliamentary body. We have heard such protestations before, and we remember what happened to them. Let but a few individuals be found to sit in the proffered seats, and those who are protesting most loudly now will be heard to say - and it will not be for the first time, either - "We must go along too, and make sure that Ulster's voice is heard". Members of the Assembly will be asked: "What was the point of your being elected if you are going to allow the future constitution and administration of Ulster to be discussed and perhaps decided in your absence?" Make no doubt: that is what the Anglo-Irish parliamentary body will get up to straight away, beginning quite likely with security and the frontier.

Nobody who knows me is unaware where my sole loyalty lies. It lies to the Crown in Parliament. But I say that the men of 1912 were right when they perceived and declared that the mother country would forfeit its right to their loyalty if it put them into a Dublin parliament. The methods and the modalities have been refined and elaborated since 1912; but the substance and the end result intended are still the same. When a British government creates an Anglo-Irish body to comprise representatives of Ulster and to deliberate on the affairs of this island, it will, so far as in it lies, have renounced its claim upon the allegiance of the British people of this province.

fr

At the General Election of December 1918 73 Sinn Fein MPs were returned out of a total of 105 Irish seats. With the exception of three, all were from what is now the Irish Republic. From that moment that part of Ireland had effectively seceded from the United Kingdom. Instead, however, of recognising the fact, the British Government legislated to separate the six counties of Ulster also from the UK by conferring home rule on Northern Ireland (which reluctantly accepted and worked it) and on Southern Ireland (which of course would not look at it). The Government of Ireland Act, 1920, provided for both Northern and Southern Ireland to be represented at Westminster on a reduced scale and to be linked by a Council of Ireland. Why?

In 1972 HMG, which had put troops into Ulster in aid of the civil power in 1969, recognised that the reality of power had passed to Whitehall and Westminster by abolishing the 1920 Act Government and Parliament of Northern Ireland. Instead, however, of accepting that Ulster would thus become henceforward, as it had been before 1921, one part among others of the United Kingdom, HMG created an inherently unworkable power-sharing devolved constitution, plus a Council of Ireland. Why?

Since 1974, when the Sunningdale constitution collapsed, HMG has still not recognised the status of Ulster as an integral part of the UK but has maintained an interim form of government there ("direct rule") pending some constitutional arrangement unique to Ulster, which has been the subject of successive initiatives in 1974-6 (the Convention); in 1979-81 (the Atkins initiatives); in 1982-3 (the Assembly). Each involved recognition in some form of an 'Irish dimension'. Why?

Prime Minister. 8

Irish expectations remain unrealistic, although RTA thinks that they are being gradually worn down. I think you will have to make very clear to Dr. Fitzgerald on 3 September that Joint Authority is not on offer either in name or in practice. He needs to give Nally more realistic instructions for the next round if it is to get anywhere.

Ref. A084/2235

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

The Secretary of the Irish Government, Mr Nally, came to see me on 30 July to convey the initial Irish response to the points I had put to him in Dublin on 16 July (my minute of 19 July). Mr Nally was accompanied by Mr Lillis of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and by the Irish Ambassador in London, Mr Dorr. I was accompanied by Mr Goodall and by the British Ambassador in Dublin, Mr Goodison.

2. Mr Nally began by emphasising that what he had to say represented only a preliminary reaction by Irish Ministers to our last round of discussions (at which I had made it clear that the role which we were proposing for the Irish Government in Northern Ireland was a consultative and not an authority-sharing one). He said that, at first sight, the British approach appeared to the Irish side to be inadequate in two respects: it would be insufficient to overcome the alienation of the minority community from the forces of law and order in Northern Ireland, while at the same time its "gradualist" character would arouse unionist fears of creeping unification. The Irish side believed that we should aim for arrangements which would be seen by all concerned to be durable, and which would at the same time be sufficiently "radical" to win the support of the minority and give the Irish Government a reasonable chance of carrying their referendum to amend Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. To meet the latter requirement, any new arrangements for the Government of Northern Ireland would have to provide "substantial authority" to an Irish Government, and be seen to do so. At this point Mr Nally again stressed that his comments did not reflect the considered views of Irish Ministers and were intended to be exploratory rather than definitive.

COP 3/p.

3. Mr Nally then turned to the security aspect, which he said was of central importance. He acknowledged the respect felt for the RUC as an efficient, technically advanced and reasonably impartial force by both the Garda and sections of the minority community in the North. At the same time he pointed out that the security forces in the North, including the RUC, were seen by the unionists as "theirs" and by the nationalist as essentially alien and consequently as instruments of coercion. The policy of "Ulsterisation", the decline in the number of Catholics joining the RUC and the rearming of the RUC to meet the terrorist threat had all helped to strengthen this impression. There was no realistic prospect of ending the alienation of the minorities unless minority areas could be policed by a "nationalist-backed" force. Although they recognised that this could not be achieved at once, the Irish believed that a bold initiative was required in that direction: something comparable to the decision by the Government of the Free State in 1922, at the height of the Irish Civil War, to establish an unarmed police force throughout the State. The Irish Government shared British misgivings about Irish security forces operating north of the border but believed it might be possible to reorganise the police so that the present RUC would operate - as an unarmed force - in those areas of the Province where the unionists were in a majority; there would be a second force, also unarmed, recruited from the Catholic community and/or perhaps from the Garda, to police the overwhelmingly nationalist areas; and a third force would be established - perhaps initially by secondment from the RUC and the Garda - which would be armed and be responsible for anti-terrorist operations throughout the Province. All three forces might be subordinate to the proposed Joint Security Commission which would in turn be subsidiary to, and operate within, a joint political framework which remained to be explored. But it would be unrealistic to think that the Irish Commissioner of Police - assuming that elements in the new force(s) would be drawn from the Garda and hence be under his command - could be responsible to a British Secretary of State. This pointed to some form of joint authority



between the British and Irish Governments. Alternatively (and Mr Nally subsequently indicated a strong preference for this solution), if it proved possible to establish a devolved, power-sharing administration in Northern Ireland then responsibility for control of the police could be devolved to that administration, leaving the Secretary of State with his constitutional responsibilities for decisions about the use of British soldiers.

4. As to the joint political framework, Mr Nally said that the Irish still had no clear ideas as to the form it might take: it could be an extension of the present Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council, or there could be an Irish Government representative (perhaps a Minister) resident in Northern Ireland or there could be regular and systematised meetings of British and Irish Ministers. Other ideas which had been mentioned - an all-Ireland Law Commission and Court, a Bill of Rights, a joint parliamentary "tier" to the AIIC and repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act - were all worth careful examination as elements in any package of new arrangements, but it was essential to get the political and security structures right first.

5. Responding to Mr Nally, I said that we shared the Irish concern to end the alienation of the minority community. We did not exclude the possibility of moving eventually to the establishment of a separate police force with responsibility for dealing with certain categories of crime such as terrorism in certain areas, and recognised that precedents existed for this, eg in the German Bundesgrenzschütz. Such a force, which would have to be armed, might be responsible to a Joint Security Commission. But it could not be established overnight: much working out would be required and the police themselves would need to be involved in the process. Graduation was thus inevitable: hence our suggestions for starting with liaison officers and joint crime squads. Moreover, our suggestions that a Joint Security Commission should be tasked to investigate the possibility of moving towards joint policing had been made on the understanding that the joint arrangements would apply on both sides of the border. If they were to apply only to



the North, ultimate authority and control would have to remain with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, even though he might decide to exercise that authority through a Joint Security Commission and thus in consultation with the Irish Government.

6. More generally, we impressed on the Irish side the dangers for morale and effectiveness of any proposals to break up the RUC or to divide responsibility for security in the North geographically between different police forces. We also emphasised that it was simplistic to imagine that it would be easy to identify, still less to demarcate, areas in which the nationalists were in an overwhelming majority; and we pointed out that dividing the Province up for the purposes of policing and security would be liable to be seen as a first step towards repartition. Moreover, even in the main nationalist enclaves such as West Belfast, an Irish force would be as likely to be at risk from terrorist as a British one. Mr Nally ruefully admitted that this was so, and said that he would have no difficulty with the idea of a "third force" which would in reality be drawn mainly from the RUC provided that it was responsible to the Joint Security Commission. Mr Dorr recalled that our common objective should be to create a police force or forces with which the minority as well as the majority community could reasonably be expected to identify. He had recently made clear on instructions that, if this could be achieved by reforms short of those which Mr Nally had floated with us earlier, Irish Ministers would be very ready to consider them. We concluded this part of the discussion by agreeing that both sides would reflect further on the possible form which joint or reformed security arrangements might take, bearing in mind the legitimate anxieties of both the minority and the majority and the need to maintain operational effectiveness.

7. We then pressed the Irish closely on what they meant by the "inadequacy" of our ideas for institutionalised consultation and the need to which Mr Nally had referred for the Irish Government to be given a measure of "substantial authority" in the North.

We pointed out that the Irish were seeking to rule out the reciprocal application of any joint arrangements to areas south of the border as politically impossible for them. It must be apparent that this would make the exercise of any Irish authority north of the border much more difficult for the unionists to accept. We had made it clear on 16 July that joint authority on the lines indicated in the Forum Report was not on offer, and Irish Ministers would have to recognise this. At the same time, they should recognise that the offer of institutionalised consultation would create a completely new political climate in Northern Ireland and would give the Irish Government a very significant measure of political influence there. It would establish a consultative structure which neither Government would want to jeopardise by unresolved disagreement. The British side was open to suggestions as to the areas which such consultation might cover and on the form or structures through which it might operate: it might for example be done through an intensified and restructured AIIC or through some form of Irish official presence in the North, or both. We expressed some doubt about the idea of an Irish Ministerial presence in Belfast. We asked whether, by talking of "substantial authority", the Irish were in effect saying that consultative arrangements could in no circumstances be enough for them.

8. After some hesitation, Mr Nally said that he recognised that "consultation was probably what it would come down to in the end"; but he agreed with me that great care would be needed in finding language with which this could be presented to the public, and particularly to the two communities in Northern Ireland. The proposals should be "transparent": it would be important not to offer conflicting interpretations of what the new arrangements would mean to the electorates north and south of the border. At the same time the Irish Government's hands were to some extent tied by the Forum Report, especially in relation to joint authority. A settlement which could not be reconciled with the terms of the Forum Report might make it impossible to carry a referendum on a change in Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution, and put the Irish Government at risk. But they recognised the corresponding

political difficulties facing the British Government. Further time was needed for consideration on the Irish side. (Mr Lillis told us separately that there had in fact been no proper discussion with the Taoiseach following our last exchange on 16 July, and that they had not yet been able to explore the implications of "institutionalised consultation" with him in any detail.)

Meanwhile, the Taoiseach remained fully committed to the exploratory process in which we were engaged. He continued to be extremely concerned at the risk of leaks, of which there seemed recently to have been examples from both sides, and remained anxious to ensure that knowledge of our exchanges should be kept within the tightest possible circle. But the Irish side was also anxious to maintain the momentum of the discussions, and would welcome a further meeting as soon as possible. It was agreed that the earliest realistic date would be around the middle of September.

9. Although not much measurable progress was made, I think the meeting was useful. It emerged with great clarity that the two central issues are security arrangements which command the confidence of both communities in Northern Ireland, and the need for some sort of joint political framework and how best to provide that. For the Irish, it was an important step in the process of lowering their expectations on the political framework and bringing them to terms with the concept of consultation as distinct from joint authority. This is a slow business; but I think that Mr Nally and Mr Lillis will now encourage the Taoiseach to look more positively at the possibilities which a consultative role for the Irish Government in the North would afford. It was clear that, while explaining the Irish Government's misgivings about our ideas, Mr Nally was under instructions not to reject them. At our next round in September (assuming that Ministers are content for me to continue these exchanges for a further round) we can expect the Irish side to come forward with ideas of their own which move further in our direction.



10. On the security front, the meeting confirmed my impression that the Irish preoccupation with the need for new policing arrangements reflects their genuine belief that the present situation is a major obstacle to reconciliation in the North. They are convinced that in the tribal circumstances of Northern Ireland the minority community will never identify with a police force which is more than 90 per cent Protestant, backed either by the (alien) British Army or by a UDR which is more than 97 per cent Protestant. The fact that this situation is in large part a consequence of terrorism and intimidation does not, in the Irish view, make it any easier for the nationalists to accept. I think that this particular Irish concern needs to be taken seriously and requires further thought on the British side. It may be that, if we could find some way of moving to meet nationalist concerns on policing, the Irish Government's requirements on the political/consultative front could be correspondingly scaled down.

11. It was clear that the Irish Government had given no further thought to the precise form of possible amendments to Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. We marked that as a subject which would need to be pursued in later exchanges.

12. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Antony Acland, Mr Robert Andrew, Mr David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield.

3 August 1984

approved by ROBERT ARMSTRONG
and signed in his absence.

Lindsay Wilkinson

E.R.

pa
dms
6/8

PRIME MINISTER

Enoch Powell rang. He told me that you had asked to see him again. I have asked him to come in on Friday 31 August though he will not appear on the diary.

er. mt

3 August 1984

SECRET
AND PERSONAL

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Copy No 2 of 11



SECRET PERSONAL

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

NBM

*CDP
2/P*

L V Appleyard Esq
Private Secretary to
the Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Downing Street West

2 August 1984

Dear Len,

NORTHERN IRELAND

Attached for information is a note of a discussion which my Secretary of State had on 24 July with our Ambassador to Dublin.

Copies go to Charles Powell (No 10), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Sir Antony Acland, Mr David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield and to Robert Andrew, Tony Brennan and Graham Angel here, as well as to Mr Goodison in Dublin.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Sandiford

G K SANDIFORD
Private Secretary

Encl

SECRET

PERSONAL

PERSONAL SECRETNOTE OF A DISCUSSION WITH HM AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
ON 24 JULY 1984

Present: Secretary of State
Mr Andrew
Mr Goodison
Mr Sandiford

1. Mr Goodison said that members of the Irish Cabinet were worried about the inter-party talks which were being initiated in Northern Ireland. They feared that the talks would not get anywhere, and by going off at half-cock would preclude any subsequent advance within a larger framework.

2. The Secretary of State said that there appeared to be unreal hopes within the Irish Government about the prospects for progress on an all-Ireland basis. He mentioned that the Irish Ambassador, Mr Dorr, had given an account of the discussions between Sir Robert Armstrong and representatives of the Irish Government which appeared to be unrealistically optimistic about the scope for movement towards joint authority. Sir Robert Armstrong's account of the discussions made clear that nothing beyond consultation was on the table, even as a basis for discussion, and that he had been at pains to make clear that joint authority - in the sense of joint sovereignty - was not a possibility. As one who had attended the discussions, Mr Goodison confirmed that joint authority had been excluded from the range of possibilities.

3. The Secretary of State said that the UK perspective was to see the discussions with the Government of the Republic as a possible route to identifying an Irish dimension acceptable to nationalist opinion (and tolerable to Unionist opinion) which could serve as a necessary ingredient of a settlement within Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State had been given the impression that the Government of the Republic still sought an all-Ireland solution which would leave the Government of the Republic with some measure of respons-

PERSONAL

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SECRET

ibility for the conduct of affairs in Northern Ireland. Mr Goodison commented that he thought Dr FitzGerald did perceive the need to reach agreement on a settlement within Northern Ireland, even if he was also attracted by discussion of the possible scope for movement on an all-Ireland basis.

4. The Secretary of State commented that the Government of the Republic was mistaken, in his view, to attach such importance to reaching agreement on a statement of principles. Agreed principles could only be so widely drawn that they provided no helpful guidance towards agreement on practical measures. Mr Goodison commented that he thought that the Government of the Republic saw no means of reaching agreement on practical measures unless there were first agreement on principles.

5. The Secretary of State said that he did not currently see any occasion to convene a conference. If a position were reached when there appeared to be general acquiescence in proposed arrangements which would provide a stable settlement, then he would not exclude the possibility of a conference to endorse such results. But to convene a conference before such a stage were reached would only be likely to lead to the political parties of Northern Ireland declaring set and intransigent positions. He had been encouraging informal talks among the party leaders, at the same time as the Report Committee of the Assembly was pursuing its task, because he believed that that was the best way of maintaining flexibility and avoiding the declaration of set positions.

6. Mr Goodison said that the view in the Republic appeared to be that the Secretary of State had set 23 or 24 August as a deadline for the outcome of discussions between the party leaders. There was also a fear that the Secretary of State, expecting to leave Northern Ireland soon, would make a precipitate attempt to erect a structure within Northern Ireland which would not, in the event, endure.

PERSONAL SECRET

7. The Secretary of State commented that it was totally unreal to suppose that the political leaders would reach any kind of agreement by the end of August. He had indicated to the political leaders that he would wish to see them again before the end of August, but that would be merely to see whether any significant contacts at all had taken place. He thought that the Government of the Republic was expecting far too much political change far too quickly. The Irish Government appeared to be deluding itself by identifying and paying attention only to those parts of the Secretary of State's speech in the Forum debate which suited their book, and ignoring the rest.

8. The Secretary of State said that the Irish Government also appeared to be building disproportionate hopes on the implications of the suggested amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution. He understood that amendment of the constitution would hardly be possible unless the Irish Government could present it as part of a much larger package; but it did not follow, either necessarily or in fact, that a package of the size the Irish Government would like to see would become possible.

9. In conclusion, the Secretary of State assured Mr Goodison that he could inform the Irish Government that he had no wish to proceed with undue haste in Northern Ireland; that his encouragement of talks among the party leaders was, in his judgment, the best way of avoiding the declaration of fixed positions; and that he had no wish to hold back from any progress which could usefully and properly be made towards a solution within Northern Ireland.

Cranham Sandiford

G K SANDIFORD

1 August 1984

PERSONAL

3-3

SECRET

CF: PM has taken attachment
with her to Austin. sub 8/8

(2)



From: THE RT. HON. J. ENOCH POWELL, M.B.E., M.P.

House of Commons,
London, S.W.1.

31st July 1984

Dear Prime Minister,

I valued highly the privilege of the three-quarters of an hour which you spared for me last Friday, and I will make use in the coming Recess of your permission to renew our conversation.

For your interest, I enclose a short historical summary, which brings out the repetitive pattern of British policy towards Ulster from 1918 to the present, about which we spoke.

Yours sincerely,
Enoch Powell.

Prime Minister

Prime Minister

Now see copy
attached. N.I.O.
warned.

I gather that he's
going to make rather an
* unhelpful speech this
week-end. C.D.P. 3/8.

h/e ea
bc PC 6



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 July 1984

NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your letter of 26 July enclosing Robert Andrew's note of his discussion on 19 July with the Irish Ambassador.

The Prime Minister has read the note with interest. She notes that Mr Dorr still appears to harbour the hope that joint authority will somehow be acceptable to us. She hopes that further efforts will be made to convince him that it is not.

I am copying this letter to Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Sir Anthony Acland, Mr David Goodall, Sir Philip Woodfield, Robert Andrew and Graham Angel.

N/O

N/O

N/O

Charles Powell

Graham Sandiford, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

NR



file
Shaby
cc PC
SS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

27 July 1984

TRANSFER OF POWER TO MAKE REGULATIONS UNDER THE JURIES
(NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1974 TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

The Prime Minister has considered the Northern Ireland Secretary's minute of 25 July on this subject. She agrees that the powers at present vested in the Northern Ireland Secretary under the Juries (Northern Ireland) Order 1974 to make regulations for purposes connected with the summoning and attendance of Jurors should be transferred to the Lord Chancellor. She also agrees that the transfer should be included in a Juries (Northern Ireland) Order under the Northern Ireland Act 1974.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C D Powell

Graham Sandiford, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office

SS



PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister (1)
Agree?
Yes ✓ CDP 26/7

TRANSFER OF POWER TO MAKE REGULATIONS UNDER THE JURIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1974 TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

Under the Juries (Northern Ireland) Order 1974, power is vested in the Secretary of State to make regulations for purposes connected with the summoning and attendance of jurors and to prescribe days for selection and inspection of Juror's Lists and the arrangement of lists and forms of notice and medical certificate. It is proposed, subject to your approval, to transfer these powers to the Lord Chancellor.

The transfer will make clear that administrative responsibility for juries in Northern Ireland rests with the Lord Chancellor by transferring the responsibility given to me by the 1974 Order, which was not dealt with when responsibility for courts administration was transferred to the Lord Chancellor by the Judicature (Northern Ireland) Act 1978. These are responsibilities which fall to the Lord Chancellor in England and Wales and this therefore is a final instalment of the transfer agreed and implemented in 1978.

If you agree, the transfer can be included in a Juries (Northern Ireland) Order which is being drafted under the Northern Ireland Act 1974, rather than in a separate order under the Ministers of the Crown Act 1975.

The Lord Chancellor agrees to the transfer and there will be no transfers of staff or money required.

I am copying this to the Lord Chancellor and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

J.P.

J. P.

Kto

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COPY LIST OF MR SANDIFORD'S LETTER TO MR BUTLER DATED 26 July

Copy No 1 Mr Butler (only copy with enclosure)
2 Mr Appleyard
3 Mr Hatfield
4 Sir Antony Acland
5 Mr David Goodall
6 Sir Philip Woodfield
7 Mr Robert Andrew
8 Mr Graham Angel
9 File

All with enclosure

**PERSONAL
SECRET**NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

1. Mr. Powell C.D.P. 27/7
2. Prime Minister

F E R Butler Esq
Principal Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

26 July 1984

Dear Robin,

NORTHERN IRELAND

Attached is a copy of a note by Robert Andrew of a discussion he had on 19 July with the Irish Ambassador. The Secretary of State has commented that he considers this to be a particularly accurate and well expressed account of the current position, and that he would be grateful if it could be drawn to the attention of the Prime Minister.

Copies of this letter go to Len Appleyard and Richard Hatfield, to Sir Antony Acland, Mr David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield, and to Robert Andrew and Graham Angel here.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Sandiford

G K SANDIFORD

Encl

**PERSONAL
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PUS/L/505/MLR

PS/Secretary of State (L)

cc Mr Brennan O/R
Mr AngelDISCUSSION WITH IRISH AMBASSADOR - 19 JULY 1984

1. I had a long discussion with the Irish Ambassador, Mr Noel Dorr, over lunch yesterday in an attempt to clear up some of the points which were evidently still worrying him at the end of his meeting with the Secretary of State on the previous day.

2. The discussion went over some of the ground already covered with the Secretary of State and was thus somewhat repetitive. As I understand it, there are three main points of concern;

a. Uncertainty about what HMG's policy now is on the 'Irish dimension' and suspicion that we do not fully appreciate the importance of what the Irish are trying to do;

b. A belief that the Secretary of State's views are somehow different from those being expressed by Sir Robert Armstrong on the Prime Minister's authority; and

c. A fear that the Secretary of State's talks with party leaders in the North will somehow undermine the Armstrong/Nally talks.

3. Dorr said that the Irish Government was reasonably pleased with the Secretary of State's speech in the Forum Debate on 2 July, and in particular welcomed the fact that his carefully

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chosen words had not ruled out the possibility of the British Government accepting the third of the Forum Report's models (joint authority) as a basis for further discussion. But in a subsequent interview with RTE Mr Prior had indicated that all three models were unacceptable; and he now seemed to be concentrating on trying to establish a system of government in the North in which the Irish dimension would play only a minor part. Dorr thought that there was "all the difference in the world" between this attempt, which was similar to those which had been going on over the years, and the very important new initiative which was being contemplated in Dublin. Mr Prior seemed to have been warning him on 18 July that the Prime Minister and other colleagues were not prepared for a major initiative. He wondered whether the British Government fully appreciated the magnitude of what the Irish Government was offering; it would be putting its very existence at stake in a referendum on Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution. The Government would not be able to face the political challenge involved in a constitutional referendum without a very large quid pro quo in terms of joint authority "or something like it". Moreover, the quid pro quo would have to be "transparent", both to reverse the alienation of the nationalists in the North and to make constitutional change acceptable in the South. For this purpose a large and dramatic gesture was required; it was not enough to talk of proceeding cautiously, step by step. It would take time to reach agreement between the two governments on what actually the dramatic gesture was to be; but the chance of success would be prejudiced if the parties in the North meanwhile took up entrenched positions as a result of their talks with Mr Prior and with each other. The Irish Government had no confidence in the ability of the parties in the North to reach agreement on their own. The Irish preference was still that the two governments should establish a joint study of principles as a framework within which all the parties (ie the two governments and the parties in the North) could then seek a solution.

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4. In reply I said that I hoped the Irish Government had not got the wrong message from the Secretary of State's Forum speech. In deference to urgent requests by Mr Barry and Dorr himself the Secretary of State had indeed used a form of words which did not entirely close the door on the concept of joint authority. But it remained the position of HMG that joint authority as defined in the Forum Report or in the proposals put forward by Nally in May was unacceptable. We could see no way in which sharing with the Irish Government matters such as the control of security forces and the appointment of members of an Executive could be compatible with the maintenance of UK sovereignty over Northern Ireland. I emphasised that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State were at one on this and added that I understood the Prime Minister had made the point to the Taoiseach when they met at Fontainbleu. I had not yet seen the record of Armstrong's talk with Nally on 16 July, but I understood that he too had made it quite clear that a joint authority solution was not acceptable and had proposed instead an Irish dimension based on consultation.

5. I went on to say that a consultative arrangement, which we envisaged would be systematised or institutionalised in some way, would be a very large step for a British Government to take, recognising as it would formally and publicly a clear right by the Irish Government to some influence in the affairs of Northern Ireland. It would not be easy for a British Cabinet to accept such a step, which would be widely condemned by Unionists, and this was why the Secretary of State had sounded a note of caution.

6. I did not think that there was any significant difference between the views expressed by the Secretary of State and those expressed by Armstrong at his meeting with Nally. Inevitably the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland saw the problem from a Northern Ireland perspective and was primarily concerned with the way in which the government of the Province was to be carried on. Our view was that this was best done in the form of a devolved government acceptable to both the majority and the minority communities. The purpose of the Secretary of State's talks with the party leaders was to explore whether it was likely to be possible to devise a system which would certainly not receive the enthusiastic support of either side but might possibly

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gain the reluctant acquiescence of both. To this end we would have to put some pressure on the Unionists and we hoped that the Irish Government would be prepared to put pressure on Mr Hume. I did not think that these talks would prejudice discussion of the Irish dimension; indeed, as Mr Prior had indicated, we saw the two as complementary. Nothing was going to happen quickly, if only because the Northern party leaders were all going on holiday. The Secretary of State hoped to have further exchanges towards the end of August; but if, as expected, he left office in September he could do no more than lay foundations for a successor to build on. It was this part of the process which we judged would have to be gradual and conducted on a step by step basis. The SDLP would certainly not take up a position until it was clear what might be available in terms of an Irish dimension. Meanwhile, I suggested that the fact that private and confidential talks were taking place might actually help to prevent the party leaders making public statements which would limit their room for manoeuvre.

7. I added that we saw the Irish dimension as more than just a means of persuading the SDLP to participate in a system of government, important though this was. We saw it as a means of reassuring the nationalist minority in the North; and to this extent it could become even more important if attempts to establish a devolved government failed and we had to continue with direct rule, since if the SDLP were no longer able to champion the cause of the nationalists, the latter might look even more to Dublin for support. The requirement was to devise an Irish dimension which would reassure the nationalists without provoking too strong a Unionist reaction. This was why we attached importance to amending Articles 2 and 3 so that, with the territorial claim removed, we could represent to the Unionists that the Irish dimension was not a step down on the slippery slope towards Irish unity. As regards the idea of a joint declaration of principles, I commented that in the Forum debate the Secretary of State had in fact enunciated a series of principles to set alongside those in the

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Forum Report. I would not necessarily rule out some attempt to construct a common framework, if this were thought to be helpful; but it seemed to us more important to explore what might be done in practical ways rather than to go on repeating general principles.

8. Dorr thanked me for this clarification of our views and said that he was "partly reassured" by it. He is going on leave at the beginning of August and we agreed to meet again early in September. As I left the Embassy I teased him a little about reports in the Irish press that the coalition was breaking up and there would be an early General Election. Did this mean that we might soon find ourselves dealing with Mr Haughey? Dorr replied seriously that he did not think the Labour Party would wish to risk an election at the present time and added that experience had shown that Mr Haughey behaved more responsibly in Government than in Opposition!

20 July 1984


R J ANDREW**PERSONAL**
SECRET



FIVE

RW
cc: PC
4

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has read with interest your minute of 19 July about your further discussions with Mr. Nally. The Prime Minister was glad, in particular, that you were able to impress on Mr. Nally and his colleagues that the role which we are proposing for the Irish Government in Northern Ireland is a consultative and not an authority-sharing role.

The Prime Minister notes that the Irish side hope to be in a position to come back to us with the Taoiseach's responses to these latest proposals before the end of the month. This does not affect her intention to postpone any further contact with the Taoiseach until the autumn.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Len Appleyard (FCO), Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office), Sir Antony Acland, Mr. Robert Andrew, Mr. David Goodall and to Sir Philip Woodfield.

(C.D. Powell)

20 July, 1984

A small, stylized handwritten mark or signature in the bottom right corner of the page.

3 (2)
Prime MinisterCDP
19/7.

Ref. A084/2076

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

As authorised in Mr Powell's minute of 12 July, I had talks in Dublin on 16 July with the Secretary of the Irish Government, Mr Nally. I was accompanied by Mr David Goodall and by the British Ambassador in Dublin (Mr Goodison). Mr Nally was accompanied by the Secretary of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr Sean Donlon, and by Mr Michael Lillis. In addition to my talks with Mr Nally and his team, I also had a short private interview with the Taoiseach, Dr FitzGerald, on which I have reported separately.

2. In responding to the proposals conveyed to us by Mr Nally on 11 May (and in my comments on the Forum Report), I followed the line summarised in paragraphs 3-5 of my minute to you of 11 July. I emphasised that, as we saw it, these discussions were more in the nature of a joint exploration of possibilities than a negotiation: we had not come with a set of cut-and-dried proposals to put to the Irish Government. I made it clear to the Irish that "joint authority" in the sense contained in the Nally proposals would in our judgment be unworkable; and that any arrangements which were incompatible with Northern Ireland remaining part of the United Kingdom under full British sovereignty would be unacceptable both in Northern Ireland and at Westminster. At the same time, British Ministers recognised the magnitude (in terms of Irish domestic politics) of the Taoiseach's offer to seek to amend Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution as part of a wider mutually acceptable package; and I suggested that, provided the Irish territorial claim were formally and effectively waived, the Government would be prepared to consider a significant role for the Government of the Republic in the North, provided that it was clearly understood that the right of final decision would remain with the British Government on all matters which were not devolved to a Northern Ireland administration.

3. In discussion, we pointed out that the establishment of a devolved administration in Northern Ireland on a basis in which both the Unionists and the SDLP would co-operate was a priority objective for both the British and the Irish Governments, and we emphasised the extreme difficulty of devising arrangements which would offer enough of an "Irish dimension" to win the co-operation of the SDLP without ipso facto rendering them totally unacceptable to the Unionists.

4. Mr Nally and his colleagues suggested that the role which we were proposing for the Irish Government in Northern Ireland was consultative, not an authority-sharing role. We agreed; and we emphasised that, in return for formally waiving its territorial claim and acknowledging the North's status as part of the United Kingdom, the Irish Government was being offered a measure of what we described as formalised or institutionalised consultation on Northern Irish affairs which would constitute a major departure from the policies hitherto pursued towards the Province by successive British Governments and give the Irish Government a very considerable degree of political influence on affairs in Northern Ireland. We suggested that this consultation might take a number of alternative (but not necessarily mutually exclusive) forms: the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council (AIIC) could be given a supplementary mandate with a North-South rather than East-West emphasis; existing Ministerial consultations between London and Dublin on Northern Irish and cross-border questions could be intensified and systematised; and it might be possible to envisage an Irish official presence in Belfast through which consultations could be channelled. In addition there would be the Joint Security Commission and the All-Ireland Law Commission (designed to lead eventually to the harmonisation of the criminal law on both sides of the border and perhaps to the establishment of an All-Ireland court) which I had adumbrated in my first round of talks with Mr Nally on 1 March. In short, the essential point for the Irish to grasp was that "joint authority" was not on offer, but that, provided the territorial claim was unambiguously waived and British sovereignty acknowledged, we would be prepared

to consider some form of systematised consultation between the two Governments in Northern Ireland over a wide range of issues including security. The nature of the consultation and extent of the issues to be covered would depend in part on the degree to which responsibility for day-to-day administration could be devolved to a locally based government: there could hardly be a formal duty of consultation between the British and Irish Governments on matters which were within the responsibility of a devolved administration.

5. Mr Nally said that the initial reaction of the Irish side was bound to be cautious and could only be an expression of personal views, since the Taoiseach and other Irish Ministers would want to consider what we had said very carefully. The Irish side believed that the touchstone of any new arrangements must be whether they would be sufficient to end the alienation of the minority community in the North: there would be no point in substituting a new form of alienation for the existing one. Mr John Hume's victory in the European elections should not be seen as indicating that alienation was on the decline: the Irish believed that it was posing an increasingly serious threat both to the prospects for restoring stability in Northern Ireland and in the longer term to the institutions of the Republic. The Taoiseach's offer to seek to amend Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution was seriously meant and carried great risks for his Government. But for there to be any realistic prospect of carrying a referendum the Taoiseach would have to be able to point to "something dramatic" in Northern Ireland. It would be for Irish Ministers to judge whether systematised consultation between our two Governments in the North would be enough to enable them to persuade the Irish electorate that the whole exercise was worth while.

6. In further discussion the Irish side probed our thinking on possible joint security arrangements. Mr Donlon in particular drew attention to the continuing distrust and hatred between the minority and the Security Forces and the need to create police arrangements and new security structures in Northern Ireland in which the minority would have confidence: a Joint Security

Commission with a few liaison officers in one another's police stations would not do much for the confidence of the man on the Bogside. We reminded them that our proposal for a Joint Security Commission envisaged that it would be tasked to examine the modalities of police co-operation, including the possibilities of moving eventually towards the creation of a new joint police force, separate from the existing RUC and Garda, with specific responsibilities for certain aspects of policing (notably for security and associated crime), rather on the model of the Bundesgrenzschutz in the Federal Republic of Germany. But we emphasised our conviction that co-operation must be allowed to evolve gradually and be seen by both sides as having practical justification. This was why we thought that it might be sensible to begin with an exchange of liaison officers, moving possibly towards the establishment of joint crime squads on lines discussed earlier. The Irish raised the question of command and control, but did not press it when we explained that discussion of security and policing policies in the Joint Security Commission would be within the framework of the systematised consultation between the two Governments which we were positing.

7. There was little discussion of the other areas to which formalised consultation might apply; but the Irish stressed that if their Ministers were to go down the consultation road (as distinct from the joint authority for which they had been hoping), they would almost certainly want to see a resident Irish Government representative in the North; that the arrangements would need to be enshrined in a formal agreement; and that it would need to be recognised that in exercising their right to be consulted the Irish Government would be acting as the spokesman or "guardian" of the minority community in the North. We asked them to reflect further on the constitutional basis for such an arrangement, bearing in mind that the Irish Government did not represent the minority in the North in any Parliamentary or electoral sense. But we agreed that, if consultative arrangements acceptable to both sides could be worked out, they would presumably need to be incorporated into a formal agreement which would include Irish acknowledgment of Northern Ireland's

status as part of the United Kingdom and which would come into effect in parallel with the amendment to the Irish Constitution. On the latter point, Mr Nally said that the Irish Government had no clear ideas as yet as to the form which amendment might take, but he thought it likely that it would substitute an "aspiration" to Irish unity for the present territorial claim. We touched briefly on the idea of a joint parliamentary group as a possible element in the consultative arrangements. The Irish said that they were still interested in this idea but did not press it.

8. On timing and tactics, the Irish expressed serious concern that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland might be envisaging holding talks with the Northern Ireland parties which could result in deadlock and parties digging themselves into entrenched positions before the two Governments were ready to go public on whatever arrangements were agreed between us as providing a framework for progress. They argued that, once inter-party talks had broken down as a result of the irreconcilable positions which the parties would feel obliged to adopt, it would be impossible for the two Governments to get them to agree on anything and the opportunity for progress would have been irretrievably lost. Mr Nally and Mr Lillis accordingly both urged that the pace of our private exploratory talks should be accelerated, and said that they hoped to be in a position to come back to us with the Taoiseach's response before the end of the month.

9. I think that this round of talks succeeded in meeting its objectives. The Irish side took on board the fact that joint authority was not on offer and that they must concentrate their minds on possible consultative arrangements combined with the establishment of a devolved government in Northern Ireland. Although they did not know whether consultative arrangements of the kind envisaged would be regarded as sufficiently dramatic to enable the Taoiseach to proceed to a referendum on amending the Constitution, they did not attempt to argue that our ideas on consultation were totally inadequate or that some form of joint authority on the Forum pattern was indispensable. We have moved the dialogue on to a more realistic basis.

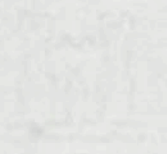


10. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Antony Acland, Mr Robert Andrew, Mr David Goodall and Sir Philip Woodfield.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

CONQUEROR



19 July 1984



FILE

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Key

cc: P.C.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has considered your minute of 11 July setting out the line which you propose to take at your meeting with Mr. Nally on 16 July. The Prime Minister agrees that you should speak as proposed.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office).

(C.D. Powell)

12 July, 1984



SEMA 1

Ref. A084/1984

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister
Agree that Sir R.
Amstrong should speak as
proposed at further meeting with
Mr. Nally?

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

Following your discussion of Northern Ireland with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 21 June and your meeting with the Taoiseach at Fontainebleau on 26 June, it was agreed in Cabinet on 28 June that the Irish Government's position should be further explored and that I should be authorised for that purpose to continue confidential discussions with the Secretary to the Irish Government, Mr Dermot Nally. I have accordingly arranged to visit Mr Nally in Dublin on 16 July, accompanied as before by Mr David Goodall and on this occasion by the British Ambassador in Dublin (Mr Goodison), whose counterpart came to my last meeting with Mr Nally in London.

CDD
11/7

in 1/16

2. The formal purpose of my meeting with Mr Nally will be to convey the Government's response to the proposals which he put to us on the Taoiseach's behalf on 11 May (my minute to you of 14 May), as subsequently amplified. (The most important amplification has of course been the Taoiseach's offer, as part of a wider and mutually acceptable package of proposals, to seek to amend the territorial provisions of the Irish Constitution.) My aim will be to get the Irish to recognise that "joint authority" as envisaged in the Nally proposals is not available; and to bring them to consider how far their own requirements - ie for a political package substantial enough to enable them to carry a referendum - might be met by more formalised consultation between the two Governments on matters relating to the North plus a greater measure of devolved government there.

in 1/16

3. In addition to making it clear that "joint Authority" on the Nally model would be inconsistent with the maintenance of British sovereignty over Northern Ireland and therefore unacceptable at Westminster as well as in the North, I would propose to stress



its unworkability in practice (as indeed I began to do at our meeting in May): in any system of government there must be a final arbiter to decide between conflicting courses of action and in Northern Ireland this can only be the British Government. Sharing the power of decision on an equal basis, quite apart from the constitutional objections, would only produce the kind of uncertainty and controversy which would make the situation on the ground worse. This is precisely what both Governments want to avoid.

4. It is encouraging that both the Irish and ourselves agree on the desirability of establishing a stable, devolved administration in Northern Ireland which both communities would be prepared to go along with, and I shall welcome this. But I shall go over the unsatisfactory aspects of the Irish proposals for joint appointment of an Executive or joint exercise of authority in the absence of such an Executive; and I shall try to make sure that the Irish understand that we cannot guarantee active Unionist participation in arrangements so framed as to be acceptable to the SDLP.

5. Against this background I would aim to explore with the Irish, on a tentative basis and without commitment, the areas in which it might be possible to formalise consultation between the two Governments on Northern Irish affairs and the areas where the Irish would regard such consultation as especially desirable. We know already that consultation confined to security matters will not be enough for them: it will be necessary to indicate that consultation might be extended to a wide range of subjects, especially those bearing on the position of the minority community. We shall have our own ideas about what subjects might be appropriate for consultation, and the process of exploring Irish views on these matters will enable us to react appropriately and to give them some idea of what may and may not be acceptable from our point of view. I would stress that affording the Irish Government in this way a formalised say in the affairs of the Province would be a major departure from the established British position and constitute a very important and visible recognition of the Irish dimension.

6. I would propose at the same time to press them hard on the form any amendment to their Constitution would take, making it clear that any wording which fell short of an unambiguous waiver of the Republic's territorial claim on the North would be valueless.

7. For the purposes of this next round of talks with Mr Nally I do not think that I require new instructions as to the detailed form which "institutionalised consultation" in Northern Ireland might eventually take. As I have explained, it is not my intention to put forward any firm or formal proposals, but simply to explore the ground. We have already canvassed ideas for closer cross-border co-operation between the two police forces, a joint security commission, an all-Ireland law commission, and measures to meet certain minority concerns (eg repeal of the Flags and Emblems Act); and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, in his speech in the House of Commons on 2 July, floated the idea of a joint Parliamentary body. This should provide enough material with which to draw the Irish into a discussion of consultative arrangements. I shall, however, need to be able if need be to indicate readiness to consider (or at least not to exclude) the possibility of a resident Irish Government representative in Northern Ireland, and to exchange preliminary views on how this status might be defined.

8. A discussion on these lines should enable us to ride the Irish off any exaggerated ideas they may still have about "joint authority"; and I shall want to draw attention to the advantages from their point of view of acquiring a measure of acknowledged influence in the Province through institutional consultation. I hope too that as a result of the discussion we shall then be able to form a clearer idea of the minimum which the Taoiseach is likely to regard as a realistic basis for backing a referendum to amend the Irish Constitution. But it is of course only at a much later stage - probably the final one - in any negotiation that the real Irish "bottom line" is likely to emerge.



9. This minute has been seen in draft by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who agree with it. I should be grateful to know if you are content that I should proceed accordingly.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

11 July 1984

CONQUEROR

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR WHITNEY

PS/PCS

~~PS/J. LYON~~

MR JENKINS



PS/S. O'S

PS/MR R. ANDREW
OAB 1/56

MR SPENCER

MR ANGE

J. LYON
~~MR JONES~~

NIO

ED/ED

ED/PSD (2)

ED INFO D

ED/NEWS D

SIR E ARMSTRONG

DIO

CABINET

PS/No 10 DOWNING STREET (2)

PP UKMIS NEW YORK

GRS 170

RESTRICTED

FM DUBLIN 041627Z JUL 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 311 OF 4 JULY 1984

INFO PRIORITY NIO (BELFAST) AND NIO (LONDON) WASHINGTON UKMIS
NEW YORK

MIPT: FORUM REPORT

1. I HAVE DISCUSSED MR HAUGHEY'S COMMENTS WITH MR QUINN, THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (LABOUR PARTY) AND MR SUTHERLAND, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (FINE GAEL). WE AGREED THAT MR HAUGHEY IS FACING SOME CRITICISM IN HIS PARTY FOR HIS INTRANSIGENCE OVER THE FORUM REPORT. IT IS FAIRLY CLEAR THAT HE IS AFRAID THAT HMG AND THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL REACH SOME KIND OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH WILL LEAD TO PROGRESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IF THIS WERE TO OCCUR, A NUMBER OF HIS SUPPORTERS COULD ABANDON HIM IN ORDER TO SUPPORT SUCH MOVES AND THIS MIGHT EVEN LEAD TO HIS LOSING CONTROL OF FIANNA FAIL. IT IS THEREFORE VERY MUCH IN HIS POLITICAL INTERESTS THAT HE SHOULD DO ALL HE CAN TO SABOTAGE ANY KIND OF PROGRESS BETWEEN US AND THIS IS WHY HE IS TAKING SO EXTREME A TONE.

GOODISON

NNNNAX

SENT AT 1746Z CAG/JB

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/VE WHITNEY

PS/PCS

~~SIR J. BULLOCK~~

VE JENKINS

...

...

ED/DID

ED/PUSD (2)

ED INFO D

ED/NEWS D

...

PS/S. O'S

PS/MR R. ANDREW
OAB 1/56

VE BERNAN

VE ANGE

J. LYON
VE ~~BOYS SWIFT~~

...

...

SIR B ARMSTRONG

DIO

...

...

PS/No 10 DOWNING STREET (3)

NIO

CABINET

GRS 650

UNCLASSIFIED

FM DUBLIN 041700Z JUL 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 310 OF 4 JULY 1984

INFO PRIORITY NIO (BELFAST) NIO (LONDON) WASHINGTON BIS NEW YORK
AND UKMIS NEW YORK

MY TELNO 305: FORUM DEBATE

1. THE TAOISEACH AND MR HAUGHEY COMMENTED YESTERDAY ON THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE, AND MR BARRY HAS TODAY ISSUED A STATEMENT ON IT.

2. DR FITZGERALD CONFINED HIMSELF TO SAYING ONLY THAT THERE HAD BEEN MUCH THAT WAS "POSITIVE AND INTERESTING" IN THE DEBATE.

3. MR HAUGHEY, SPEAKING ON RTE RADIO, SAID THAT MR PRIOR'S SPEECH AMOUNTED TO "A COMPLETE REJECTION OF THE FORUM REPORT BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT". IT CONSTITUTED "THE GREATEST AND MOST CONSIDERED REBUFF TO DEMOCRATIC IRISH NATIONALISM" IN MODERN TIMES. THE BRITISH RESPONSE HAD "FURTHER ENTRENCHED INTRANSIGENT UNIONISM AND, BY REJECTING THE VIEWS OF DEMOCRATIC NATIONALISTS, GIVEN A FURTHER BOOST TO VIOLENCE". MR PRIOR'S STATEMENT "ENDORSES THE RIGHT OF UNIONISTS TO SELF-DETERMINATION, BUT DENIES THE SAME RIGHT TO THE NATIONALIST PEOPLE". THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD "MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO BRING LASTING PEACE AND STABILITY TO NORTHERN IRELAND". THE MEETING BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND MRS THATCHER WOULD NOT EVEN BE A SUMMIT, SINCE MRS THATCHER HAD DOWN-GRADED IT TO "ONE OF OUR USUAL BILATERALS". (SEE MIFT FOR COMMENT)

4. MR BARRY'S STATEMENT, WHICH QUOTES LIBERALLY FROM MR PRIOR'S SPEECH, FOCUSSES ON 'A NUMBER OF POSITIVE FEATURES IN THE DEBATE SUCH AS THE RECOGNITION GIVEN TO THE PROBLEMS OF ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR THE TWO IDENTITIES IN THE ISLAND AND OF ALIENATION WITHIN THE MINORITY COMMUNITY. REFERRING TO THE 'COURAGE' SHOWN BY CONSTITUTIONAL NATIONALISTS IN THE FORUM IN ACKNOWLEDGING 'INADEQUACIES IN (THEIR) OWN TRADITIONAL APPROACHES', MR BARRY SAYS: 'IT IS HEARTENING THAT MR PRIOR TOO HAS FOUND THE COURAGE TO MAKE SIMILAR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS'. THE STATEMENT NOTES WITHOUT COMMENT THAT MR PRIOR'S SPEECH 'CONTAINED THE FIRST CLEAR ACCEPTANCE BY A BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT HAS A LEGITIMATE ROLE IN SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONALISTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND', AND THAT IT 'RECOGNISED THAT THE DANGERS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND OF.... DOING NOTHING ARE GREATER THAN THE OBVIOUS RISKS OF SEEKING TO MAKE SOME ADVANCE'.

5. ON THE MODELS FOR THE FUTURE IN THE FORUM REPORT ITSELF, MR BARRY'S STATEMENT SAYS THAT 'THE SECRETARY OF STATE CONFINED HIMSELF TO EXPRESSING THE VIEW THAT UNIONISTS WOULD NOT AGREE TO THEM 'INASMUCH AS ANY OF THESE MODELS SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND''. MR BARRY MAKES IT CLEAR HOWEVER THAT IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH HMG, THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL 'CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THE REPORT... IN ALL OF ITS ASPECTS'. HE STATES HIS BELIEF THAT 'THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN MR PRIOR'S STATEMENT IS HIS PROPOSAL TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT. THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL, OF COURSE, PARTICIPATE FULLY IN SUCH TALKS'. HE BELIEVES THAT 'THERE IS NOW CONSIDERABLE COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN OUR ANALYSIS OF WHAT IS WRONG IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THAT WE HAVE DEVELOPED A GOOD DEAL OF COMMON THINKING IN WHAT THE FORUM IDENTIFIED AS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SITUATION.... IN THE MONTHS AHEAD THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE SEEKING TO BUILD ON THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH, AND INDEED UPON OTHER POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MANY SPEAKERS, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF NORTHERN UNIONISM'. WHETHER THESE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE FRUITFUL IS AS YET UNPREDICTABLE, 'BUT THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS HAS AT LEAST SIGNALLED THAT THE EFFORT TO MAKE SUCH PROGRESS IS NOW WORTHWHILE'.

6. FULL TEXT OF MR BARRY'S STATEMENT FOLLOWS BY BAG TO RID AND NIO (LONDON) AND (BELFAST)

GOODISON

KITTO ARE THE LAST ONE FER TONITE THEN WE DO THE FINAS FINALS

PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR. WHITNEY

PS/PCS

~~SIR J. BURNETT~~

MR. JENKINS

ED/RID

ED/PUSD (2)

ED/INFO D

ED/NEWS D

HD/NAD

PS/S. O'S

PS/MR R. ANDREW
OAB 1/56

MR. SPENNER

MR. ANGE

J. LYON

MR. BOYS SMITH

SIR B. ARMSTRONG

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 305 OF 3 JULY 1984

INFO IMMEDIATE: NIO (B) NIO (L) WASHINGTON BIS NEW YORK

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FORUM DEBATE: PRESS COMMENT

1. ALL THREE DUBLIN MORNING PAPERS CARRY EDITORIAL COMMENT ON YESTERDAY'S HOUSE OF COMMONS DEBATE, ON LARGELY PREDICTABLE LINES.

2. THE IRISH TIMES TAKES THE VIEW THAT:

'THE (BRITISH) GOVERNMENT ON THE EVIDENCE OF (MR PRIOR'S) WORDS IS NOT SAYING ANYTHING NEW. IT IS NOT ADDRESSING ITSELF SERIOUSLY TO THE REPORT OF THE NEW IRELAND FORUM. IT IS STILL SAYING....'NOT AN INCH''.

THE IRISH TIMES RECOGNISES SOME POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN MR PRIOR'S SPEECH WHICH SUGGEST 'THAT HE IS GOING BACK.... TO THE SUNNINGDALE CONCEPT', BUT:

'NOTHING THAT MR PRIOR HAS SAID YESTERDAY WILL GO ANY PART OF THE WAY TOWARDS ENDING THE KILLING AND THE MAIMING AND THE HATING. NOTHING THAT MR PRIOR SAID GETS TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM WHICH COSTS IRISH LIVES WEEK IN, WEEK OUT''.

3. NEVERTHELESS, THE IRISH TIMES POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT SPECULATES THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL BE PLEASED BY THE TONE AND CONTENT OF MR PRIOR'S SPEECH, ALTHOUGH NEITHER GOVERNMENT NOR OPPOSITION WAS PREPARED TO COMMENT LAST NIGHT. MR PRIOR'S

SPECULATES THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL BE PLEASED BY THE TONE AND CONTENT OF MR PRIOR'S SPEECH, ALTHOUGH NEITHER GOVERNMENT NOR OPPOSITION WAS PREPARED TO COMMENT LAST NIGHT. MR PRIOR'S "FIFTH REALITY" IN PARTICULAR IS THOUGHT LIKELY TO CAUSE SATISFACTION IN DUBLIN.

4. THE IRISH PRESS HAS NOTHING GOOD TO SAY ABOUT THE DEBATE:

"WHAT WE GOT WAS A DULL, MONOTONOUS, FLAT RECITATION OF CLICHES FROM MR PRIOR THAT PAID NO JUSTICE TO THE EFFORT AND HOPES WHICH WENT INTO THE REPORT'S COMPILATION..... THE MESSAGE IS - THERE IS NO MESSAGE. THERE WILL BE MORE CONCENTRATION ON SECURITY, MORE LOSS OF LIFE, MORE IN JAIL AND NORTHERN IRELAND WILL RUMBLE ON IN POISONOUS HOPELESSNESS, WHICH WILL AFFECT NOT ALONE THE NORTH BUT ALSO THE REPUBLIC.... THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS YESTERDAY WOULD HAVE SERVED TO BENEFIT ONLY THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN CONSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES".

5. THE IRISH INDEPENDENT TAKES A MUCH MORE POSITIVE LINE:

"NOTHING SAID BY MR PRIOR.... YESTERDAY PREVENTS A MOVE FORWARD BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO A POINT WHERE DISCUSSIONS BASED ON THE ATTITUDES REVEALED IN THE FORUM REPORT CAN START... THE IRISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO FEEL A QUIET CONFIDENCE THIS MORNING THAT THE LOG-JAM HAS BEGUN TO BREAK UP".

ACCEPTING THE NEED FOR CAUTION IN THE RUN UP TO THE MARCHING SEASON, THE INDEPENDENT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT:

"MR PRIOR MADE A THOUGHTFUL AND UNDERSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE, ALL THE TIME WITH MRS THATCHER BESIDE HIM".

IF MR PRIOR'S OWN PREFERENCE WAS FOR DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT, THE INDEPENDENT RECOGNISES A SUBTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIS OPPOSITION TO THE UNITARY STATE OPTION IN THE FORUM REPORT, AND HIS ARGUMENT THAT THE OTHER OPTIONS "WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE - IN THE NORTH"

6. THE INDEPENDENT ALSO WELCOMES MR PRIOR'S RECOGNITION THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT "HAS A SAY IN THE NORTH", AND HIS STATEMENT THAT WHEN IT COMES TO THE GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND WITHIN THE UK THERE IS NO UNIONIST OR NATIONALIST VETO. IT SEES THE LOW KEY OF THE DEBATE AS HELPFUL AND CONCLUDES:

"THE TAOISEACH CAN NOW SET HIS EXPERTS TO WORK ON PRACTICAL PROPOSALS FOR THE NEXT MEETING WITH MRS THATCHER".

GOODISON

NNNN

New Ireland Forum

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn—[Mr. Donald Thompson.]

3.37 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. James Prior) *rose—*

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): This is the Secretary of State's swansong—the executioner is by his side.

Mr. Prior: Just because I put the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) in order the other day, there is no need for him to try to get his own back today.

I strongly welcome this debate, and I am glad that it is on the New Ireland Forum report and several other documents, which are of great use and interest to the House. The New Ireland Forum report was published some time ago. Most people recognise that parts of it were disappointing and unacceptable to the British Government or British people. However, I recognise that there was positive value in its serious examination of nationalist aspirations, its emphasis on the importance of consent, its unequivocal condemnation of violence, its attempt to understand the Unionist identity and its openness to discuss other views. Above all, the tone of the document, its language and what has been said about it since are a very important part of all that has taken place over the past few months.

Much the same can be said about the Unionist document "The Way Forward". Its tone, its recognition of an Irish nationalist identity, its openness and its language are all an important contribution. When the rhetoric of the election campaign or, for that matter, the rhetoric of the divide itself is discounted, I think that there is much more hope of a positive climate than there has been for some while. Surely no one doubts that we should seek to build on the opportunity that now presents itself. In doing so, we all have to be well aware of the present circumstances in Northern Ireland.

I shall now say something about the security situation, and, in doing so, pay tribute on behalf of the House to the work of the police and the Army. There has been a great improvement over the past few years in the security situation, yet still the toll of terror and murder is present. Every incident divides society more, and no one knows that better than the terrorists themselves. They seek to undermine democratic politics, and because they seek to do that we must in turn find a strong and effective political response. Unless we do so, terrorism will go on, as it may even if we do so.

I have to tell the House that I have changed my view over the years. At one time, I felt that a major, strong and effective political response would in itself prevent terror. Now I am of the belief that in the short run political progress may increase terrorism, for a short time before things improve. I have to remember as well that many terrorists are so deeply enmeshed in crime and criminality of all sorts that it would be very difficult to wean them away from it.

We still face a very difficult security situation, and we have to couple that with an equally bad economic position. We have unemployment of just over 20 per cent. We have a very young work force with more young people coming on to the labour market than anywhere else in the United Kingdom or in most countries of Western Europe. We

have more women wishing to return to the labour force. All this means that, even given that there is no deterioration from the present position, over the next four years the number of unemployed is likely to rise to some 25 per cent.

The difficulties of attracting inward investment on which so much of the future employment of the Province depends are, of course, made far greater by the terrorist activity that still takes place. Nor do I believe that it is healthy for a society to be as dependent on public expenditure as Northern Ireland has been in recent years. Again, that poses a serious problem for Northern Ireland.

It is against that background of violence and economic deprivation that we look today at these reports. If I feel a sense of urgency, it is born of an intense desire to find a way to help a very remarkable people—by a people of immense courage. Today, in a ceremony at the Cenotaph in Belfast, people will be paying tribute to the Ulster division which took part in the battle of the Somme. Throughout its history, the people of Ulster have found occasion to show quite extraordinary courage. We should all pay recognition to that fact.

There is great resilience in the Province. When one considers the setbacks of the past few years it is little more than a miracle that Northern Ireland has maintained as great a degree of normality as it has. The Province is an extraordinarily friendly place. Despite all that in historical terms—some would have said even in modern terms—the Northern Irish have suffered at the hands of the British, they hold out the hand of friendship in a way that would do credit to any other part of the world. For all those reasons, it is not surprising that as Secretary of State I feel a sense of urgency and an enormous desire to do what one can to help the Province forward.

There have been some notable improvements over the past few years. Housing in Northern Ireland is now improving dramatically, particularly in Belfast. Leisure facilities and health and social services have all prospered. That is of credit to both Governments. We should not be ashamed of taking credit for it. Nor should we underestimate the much greater fairness that there is in society now compared with 15 years ago. There is the ombudsman, the Fair Employment Agency and the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights. In his 1983 report the ombudsman said that he has not received one complaint of political or religious discrimination. However, despite that, the minority still feel that they have fewer opportunities and do suffer discrimination. They feel it in jobs and in contact with the police and the Army. I hope that the news of the last few days that Shorts is contemplating an additional factory to occupy part of the old De Lorean factory will come about. That is another sign of the need to spread jobs as widely as we possibly can.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): When the Secretary of State says that there have been no complaints of religious discrimination to the ombudsman, surely he realises that that is because people feel that it is hopeless to complain. That is why, among other reasons, this struggle is going on.

Mr. Prior: That sort of comment does not help at all. I am trying to speak in as conciliatory and reasonable way as I can. There is nothing to stop people complaining.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have let the question be asked, and we must move on.

BILL PRESENTED

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (No. 2)

Mr. David Steel, supported by Mr. Jonathan Aitken, Sir Bernard Braine, Mr. Robin Corbett, Mr. Clement Freud, Mr. Bruce George, Dr. David Owen, Mr. Richard Wainwright, Mr. Kenneth Warren, Mr. Dafydd Wigley and Mr. David Young, presented a Bill to establish a general right of access to official information for members of the public subject to certain exemptions; to establish the machinery for enabling the right of access to be exercised by members of the public; to make new provision for the protection of official information and articles; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 July and to printed. [Bill 205.]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, & c.

Ordered,

That the draft Education Support Grants Regulations 1984 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Pedal Bicycles (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 1984 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Deer (Firearms etc.) (Scotland) Order 1984 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Companies Acts (Pre-Consolidation Amendments) (No. 2) Order 1984 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Motor Vehicle Tyres (Safety) Regulations 1984 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—[Mr. Donald Thomson.]

SCOTTISH ESTIMATES]

Ordered,

That the Estimates set out hereunder be referred to the Scottish Grand Committee:

Class XV, Vote 1, Agricultural support, Scotland.

Class XV, Vote 2, Agricultural services and fisheries, Scotland.

Class XV, Vote 6, Roads transport and environmental services, Scotland.

Class XV, Vote 7, Local transport services, Scotland.

Class XV, Vote 24, Scottish Office administration.

—[Mr. Donald Thompson.]

They complain to me if they want to, and I am certain that they are capable of complaining to the ombudsman as well.

It is true that we have tried, as did our predecessors in government, to encourage political understanding within the communities. The way that we chose was to set up an Assembly through the Northern Ireland Act 1982. The Assembly has done valuable work and its committees have been of considerable importance. It is equally true, as in this House, that sometimes the plenary sessions have been less successful, but that is nothing particularly marked in modern chambers of Parliament. The Assembly was designed to ensure that the difficult problems did not have to be taken head on in the early days of the Assembly. John Morley, Mr. Gladstone's Ireland Secretary, said:

"The best guarantee of justice in public dealings is the participation in their own government of the people most likely to suffer from injustice".

That is another reason why I want to see the whole community represented in an assembly in Northern Ireland.

That, then, is the background against which to judge the prospect for movement. Burke once said:

"nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little".

The dangers for the people of Northern Ireland of sitting back and doing nothing are greater than the obvious risks of seeking to make some political advance. There are several documents before us, and there is much common ground between the Unionist document "The Way Forward" and the report of the New Ireland Forum. In an interesting article in the *Belfast Telegraph* on Friday, Dr. Garret FitzGerald wrote;

"Reading the two reports"

—that is, the forum Report and "The Way Forward"—

"as objectively as a committed participant in the preparation of one of them can do, I am struck by the extent to which they together provide a basis for dialogue. This is true despite the fact that the principal thrust of each is different, and that the gap between the nationalist and unionist approaches in the two documents remains, naturally enough, very wide."

Indeed, "The Way Forward" says:

"The time is now ripe for both communities in Northern Ireland to realise that, essentially, their problems will have to be solved in Northern Ireland by their political representatives and that any future prospect for them and their children is best provided for within the Northern Ireland context. This will require a mutual recognition of each other's hopes and fears. Only rights can be guaranteed, not aspirations, but it is the responsibility of the majority to persuade the minority that the Province is also theirs."

In trying to plot a way forward, that gives us a good deal to work on.

However, the forum report was much less than fair to what successive British Governments have sought to do during the past 15 years. There has been much discussion about the realities, which are contained in the first part of chapter 5 of the report. But there is one overriding and abiding reality from which we cannot escape, and that is that consent is simply not forthcoming for any formulation that denies the Unionists their right not only to belong to the United Kingdom but to be apart from the Republic. That consent must be free and cannot be coerced. I do not think that any hon. Member believes that coerced consent could possibly work.

This is where the report's difficulties begin to show. It outlines three models. The first is a unitary state, the second a form of federation, and the third is called "joint authority". The report makes it clear that each is to be

achieved by "agreement and consent". Inasmuch as any of the models significantly alters the sovereignty of Northern Ireland, it is a dangerous fallacy to imagine that the Unionist majority will agree. It is equally false to imagine that the Government or anyone else can engineer or induce such agreement. I do not know how those who seek a unitary state by consent imagine that they can secure it in the foreseeable future.

But it would be unfair to the tone of the report and to the way in which it has been presented by the Irish Government to concentrate only on those detailed points. The report leaves room for other views. As it says:

"The parties to the Forum also remain open to discuss other views which may contribute to political development."

Indeed, Dr. FitzGerald described the report as an agenda and not a blueprint. He put particular emphasis on the realities and principles set out in the first paragraphs of chapter 5. Recognising our different perspectives, he suggested that we give our own understanding of the realities in Northern Ireland. I agree that that would be helpful, and I have already mentioned consent. It is a fact that the majority of people in Northern Ireland are totally committed to maintaining it as part of the United Kingdom and are firmly opposed to becoming part of a united Ireland on any terms. Unionists utterly reject incorporation into an Irish state with what they see as its Roman Catholic ethos, its tradition of neutrality and political parties from a very different background.

At the same time, there is a substantial and significant minority of people in the Province who are strongly committed to Northern Ireland sooner or later becoming part of a united Ireland. They feel no sense of identification with many aspects of government nor with those whose job it is to uphold law and order in Northern Ireland. They resent the fact that there is so little scope for expression of their Irish identity. They see themselves as excluded from any effective exercise of political power over the affairs of the Province. That increases the suspicion with which they view the actions and motivations of both Unionists and the Government of the United Kingdom.

Fifteen years of violence have deepened suspicions and mistrust in both communities. To that extent, agreement is now harder to achieve. To suggest that there is some simple and quick solution that can somehow overcome those fundamental differences only arouses false expectations and fears, and so leads to greater instability and violence. Therefore, we must be realistic about our objectives and difficulties.

The second reality is that, whatever views may be taken about the merits of partition, now, more than 60 years on, Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and is recognised internationally as such. Indeed, Northern Ireland has been part of the United Kingdom for more than 180 years and Protestants have been part of its society for much longer than that. It is right, therefore, both in principle and in practice, that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland should be amended only by the freely given consent of its people. That has been recognised—and, I think, is still recognised—by successive Irish Governments.

For our part, that is, of course, set out in section 1 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973. However, I do not believe that enshrining it in legislation is of very great importance. I have always felt that what mattered was not what was written in the Act but the consent of the

[Mr. Prior]

people. All sorts of things could be overturned in an Act, but without the consent of the people such changes could not be made. If the implications of that reality are fully accepted, they should open up the possibility of dialogue without fear of misunderstanding or misrepresentation. The more the demand for repeal, the greater perhaps the suspicion. But I personally do not believe that that is all that important.

The third reality is that, as long as Northern Ireland is a sovereign part of the United Kingdom, its government and administration must ultimately remain a matter for this Parliament. It is for Parliament to decide. Parliament rightly has to take account not just of the wishes and strongly held principles of the majority but the strongly held views and principles of the minority. It must be satisfied that there is the necessary degree of acceptance, since without that no democracy can be made to work. It must also recognise the interests, values and standards of the people of the United Kingdom as a whole. This does not necessarily mean that the Province will be governed in exactly the same way as other parts of the United Kingdom or that it must be governed exactly as the majority wish. We shall take account of all views.

The fourth reality is that the government and administration of Northern Ireland must be undertaken in the light of the needs and responses of the people there and of the resources available to the United Kingdom as a whole. We believe that these needs are best met in a devolved administration which has the support of both sides of the community. When it comes to the government and administration of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, there is no Unionist veto, just as there is no nationalist veto.

We recognise the sense of grievance and frustration which history has created in the minority community. So, as we are committed to the support of the majority in their right to self-determination, we are equally committed to the minority. Arrangements should be directed at recognising the Irish identity, and at developing the minority's participation and confidence in all the structures and processes of Northern Ireland. Some aspects of our practices and administration are not sensitive enough to those requirements. We are ready to talk with the constitutional representatives of the minority community to identify what these are and to see what we can do to help. But while the Government are prepared to recognise and accommodate the sense of Irish identity among the minority in this way, they cannot accommodate any identity, whether Unionist or nationalist, expressed through violence or through rejection of the law and institutions of the country.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): The Secretary of State says that neither the nationalists nor the Unionists will have a veto in the consideration of what is acceptable and important to this House. Given that both in London and in Dublin there are large areas of common interest which are vital and which are seen through similar eyes, will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that there will be no veto from Northern Ireland when there is a large measure of agreement between Westminster and Dublin?

Mr. Prior: That will be so, where changes in the Northern Ireland constitution are not involved. Of course, we are prepared to consider all views, but implicit in

everything is obtaining the consent of the people of Northern Ireland if any change in the constitution is to be made.

The fifth reality is that geography, as well as the fact that many people in Northern Ireland feel an allegiance to Dublin and to the Irish state, calls for a close relationship between the United Kingdom Government and the Republic. We have much in common. Much of our history is shared. We have a cultural heritage which is distinctive but intertwined. Family ties bind many of us together. We share many of the same concerns in society, in our economies, in our relations with other parts of the world, in our parliamentary traditions and our democratic values. We are major trading partners in the European Community. We share a common border and we have a joint and abiding concern for the peace, stability and prosperity of these islands. We have a terrorist problem, the political creed of which knows no boundaries and which is a problem and threat to us both. These are the realities of our relationship.

Recognising all the realities—both those which affect Unionists and Nationalists in the north and those which derive from the position of the Irish state and the Government—how should we proceed? A degree of institutional co-operation already exists. Ideas in many areas—security, economic and parliamentary—are worth exploring for the benefits that they will bring to all sides.

A parliamentary body drawn chiefly from Westminster and the Dail could be of value and could strengthen further the good will of the Anglo-Irish parliamentary group. But, however beneficial such ideas might be, not least for security arrangements, they are unlikely to be accepted and therefore they are unlikely to be workable, so long as the suspicion is that they are directed, not at reflecting the interest of the minority and or common concerns, but at advancing the Republic's constitutional claim against the wishes and consent of the majority of the people.

The need for assurance and countering alienation is not all one way. That is why I think that Dr. FitzGerald's recent interviews on radio and television and in the press have been valuable.

The purpose of comparing our realities with those set out in the forum report is to gauge what our relationship could and should be, so that it gives greater confidence to both communities that they can fulfil their traditional roles within Northern Ireland.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The Secretary of State used the word "chiefly" a few moments ago in relation to the parliamentary tier. He said that the body would be "drawn chiefly from Westminster and the Dail". Where else?

Mr. Prior: I hope that representatives might also come from the Northern Ireland Assembly. I think that the body has importance without that. That is why I do not want to push that issue too far at this stage.

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): Many of us are in favour of representation from Westminster and the Dail, but we have strong reservations about representation from the Assembly.

Mr. Prior: That is one view. People must work out what is acceptable for themselves. I think that a number of people from the Assembly would wish to come to such

a parliamentary institution. If they do not wish to come, they will not. They will boycott the body. That is an old Irish custom with which I am familiar.

Summing up, the present situation is not satisfactory. It is not satisfactory for the Government who face the continued drain on our political, economic and human resources. It is not satisfactory for nationalists in Northern Ireland, who feel cut off from decision making and from a proper recognition of their Irish identity. It is not satisfactory for Unionists, who are blamed for their intransigence and who are as cut off from decision making as the nationalists, particularly at local government level, which they value so much. It is not satisfactory for the Irish Government, who are challenged to propound and justify nationalist aspirations and who are menaced themselves by terrorist violence. It is not satisfactory for our two countries, knowing Northern Ireland can remain a source of friction and ill will between us.

If we are to find ways of taking things forward, we must each be convinced that they will lead to real improvement. The Government are not prepared to introduce measures which are designed simply to enhance the interests of one group or the other and which are guaranteed to lead to further turmoil.

We have in the next few months the opportunity to find some better ways, following from the forum report, "The Way Forward" and the other documents produced by the political parties and the Assembly. I want to see careful, detailed and substantive discussions taking place between the parties. I hope that each political party in Northern Ireland will be ready to talk to each other, without commitment other than to finding some better way forward. They have not always been prepared to do that. I hope that they might do so without great publicity or damaging speculation. We must have patience and allow things to be taken quietly and steadily.

I am convinced that it is better for the parties themselves to find common ground than for us to try to force it upon them. However, I have no illusions that this will be easy. The Government could not possibly stand idly by. For their part, the Government will want to have talks with each of the parties involved and with the Irish Government. In addition, the Prime Minister will meet the Taoiseach before the end of the year. We want that to be a useful and constructive meeting.

Throughout all our talks, we shall test whether, and, if so, in what way, those we meet wish to be involved with the arrangements that might develop. Unionists can take part in the knowledge that the position of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom is secure. Nationalists can do so knowing that we want to find an acceptable way to involve them and that we are concerned about the views that the Irish Government have expressed on their behalf.

There are many possibilities. I have stated my preference for a devolved administration. It has much to offer both Unionists and nationalists. It would complement well the development of normal Anglo-Irish relations. Within the various levels of administration, it should be possible fully to reflect the width of interest within both communities and to safeguard the concern of each, while recognising the British and Irish aspects.

I do not rule out any of the schemes now being tentatively discussed in the Assembly's Report Committee. I do not wish this afternoon to mention specific proposals. What is important today is to open the debate, to start people thinking about how to respond and

to drive home once more the dreadful penalty of failure. The aim is to move towards agreement or, at least, towards acquiescence which could then lead to a shared perception of what is acceptable. It is mainly a matter for the political parties in Northern Ireland, for their constituents and for their leaders. It will require from them both flexibility and imagination.

In the past, we have been too preoccupied with the search for the ideal. People have been too ready to hold out for their ideal. Any new arrangements must, almost by definition, fall short of everyone's basic ideal. But accommodation and agreement provide by far the best basis for the future. I warn against dramatic or hasty gestures and the constant cry for new initiatives. Only by steady, quiet progress and confidence-building can we achieve results. The coming months are, therefore, crucial. We have a real opportunity to take matters forward. No doubt there will be much rumour, a good deal of apprehension and many attempts at misrepresentation. We expect the terrorists to try to upset the prospects for progress, as they have tried to do for some time.

I have tried to set out the economic and security worries that beset us. Within Northern Ireland the people have an overwhelming desire for peace and employment. Whether a Catholic in New Barnsley or the Bogside or a Protestant in South Armagh or the Shankill, they are the people of Northern Ireland and they deserve better than they have had these past 15 years. We are in politics in this House to further the welfare of the people. Never was that a more worthy objective than in Northern Ireland, and that is why today should be a further step along that difficult path.

4.13 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): In a debate of this sort, there are two possible roles for the Opposition. We may believe that the Government are fundamentally wrong, that vital principles are at stake and that unless the Government can be turned aside from their course it will inevitably lead to disaster. Then, the task of Opposition speakers is to urge the Minister to think again, if he will listen, and, if he will not, to rally resistance. That is an easy speech to make. If the issue is plain and important enough, if the folly of the Government's course is obvious to everyone other than the Prime Minister, the Opposition can have a great time at the Dispatch Box evoking cheers on the one side and catcalls on the other. The Government have presented us with no shortage of such issues—divisive confrontational and disastrous.

But if the Opposition believe that the Minister is confronted by problems that are not of his own making, that he is anxious to avert a tragedy, that he is not without compassion, and I believe all those of this Secretary of State—although he will not thank me for saying so, I am not sure that he is entirely at home in the Cabinet—it may be that the Opposition can best serve those immediately affected by encouraging the Minister to persevere and by stiffening his back. Of course, the task then of Opposition speakers is less dramatic. They have not to evoke cheers but to encourage serious thought. The price is that the debate will be low key and less entertaining.

I have my differences with the Secretary of State; there is little accord between us on economic issues. Indeed, if anyone doubts that they should read the report of our debate on industrial training last week. Some of the Secretary of State's remarks in his opening speech might

[Mr. Peter Archer]

lead me to join issue with him, but our differences can be debated on another occasion unless he succeeds in his major objective to initiate a discussion, and unless the parties are interested in discussing the nature and extent of the issues, debating our differences does not matter.

If the political leaders in Northern Ireland say, "We do not want to discuss; we prefer slogans to ideas; we want the waste and the alienation and the frustration to continue; we want to underline our differences in human blood; we want to leave behind as our political testament a trail of alienation and violation", then the real nature of the issues does not matter. All of us in the House care for the people of Northern Ireland. The Opposition have no other concern. There is no practical advantage and no political mileage in one outcome rather than another. We are concerned only to plead with the parties to rest their cases not on the repetition of slogans, but on rational discussion and to explore how the interests of everyone can be fairly and effectively protected.

The Secretary of State has urged the parties to undertake a dialogue. If ever I was blessed with the gift of persuasion, I hope today to persuade them to try. Democratic politics and constitutional processes are about exploring differences and saying how they can be resolved. But if each side is content to blame the other for refusing to discuss, while the misery slides into tragedy and the tragedy into chaos, nothing would be more pointless than for the Secretary of State and me to debate the constitutional details of our differences.

I do not propose to rehearse the cost of the troubles in human life or the economic resources that are vitally needed for other purposes. The tariff is too well known. If the price is not obvious, it cannot become more so by my reciting statistics. I endorse what the right hon. Gentleman said about terrorism. We shall have an opportunity to discuss that on Thursday, and I am content to leave it there. If it is not obvious that every section of the community, from all the traditions, would benefit if the future could become certain rather than have hanging over their heads a chronic uncertainty, I doubt whether I could make it more obvious by spelling it out.

I wish to make clear where the Opposition stand. We believe that political parties in Great Britain should level with the people of Northern Ireland. They are entitled to an honest statement. I believe that much of the anxiety and mistrust arises because British Governments have not always made their position clear. The United Kingdom Government cannot accept the role of a silent traffic policeman; they are necessarily involved. If there is to be any way forward, we must tender a view with which the various parties can express their agreement or disagreement.

The Opposition believe that the interests of the people of Northern Ireland will be best served by the unification of Ireland. My hon. Friends and I have given our reasons for believing that many times, and they are well known. I should be happy to debate them on any proper occasion. Perhaps, if some of my hon. Friends catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, they may wish to deploy them again today. There are right hon. and hon. Members in the Chamber who disagree. I have heard their reasons and I respect them.

We believe in unification, but by consent, and there is no hedging or fudging on either part of that proposition. I have been asked to confirm that consent means consent

freely given. It does. That is not an announcement of policy but a statement of the dictionary definition of the word. Of course, consenting to something is making a decision, and no decision is ever wholly free; it is always made within certain constraints. — [Interruption.] Making a decision entails taking account of the consequences of doing something or of not doing it. When we talk about consent, we mean consent, and that is only to recognise the practicalities.

I agree with the Secretary of State that it is not what is in an Act that is important. The shotgun wedding of 1 million with 3 million people without their consent would simply not be workable. I am sure that there are those who cannot wait to speak in the debate to declare that that is an idle policy because that consent, they say, will never be forthcoming. I disagree. I will do my best to persuade the people of the Loyalist tradition that, given appropriate conditions, agreement would be the voice of wisdom.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell (Down, South): Put up candidates.

Mr. Archer: How we resolve our differences is a matter that I do not intend to debate with the right hon. Member for Down, South (Mr. Powell) today. I believe that agreement would be the voice of wisdom and that future generations of Northern Ireland Protestants would agree with that. I believe there will come a time when they will see that, but I may be wrong. If there is to be any peace for the people of Northern Ireland, we should all consider it possible that we may be wrong. Time will decide which of us is right. History will adjudicate on who can say, "I told you so."

But today we are not discussing unification. Nobody in his right mind would ask the Loyalist parties to come forward today and declare their consent to unification. If I were in their position, I should want to be much clearer as to what was on offer and much more specific as to the conditions on which, no doubt, they would insist.

All that is being asked today is that the parties should agree to talk. Right hon. and hon. Members from the Loyalist tradition should accept that we in the Opposition want to talk to them as friends. There is no purpose in that unless we talk to them as honest friends, and there are things that they should know. It will not do to say that if there is no agreement on the ultimate constitutional solution, we cannot change the status quo.

The status quo is not neutral. It is seen by the Nationalist people as a victory for the Unionists, and one third of the population of Northern Ireland will say that nobody asked their consent to the present arrangements, and they will say that they did not consent to them. The requirement of consent cannot be construed as a veto over any initiative, any experiments or any political developments. A province cannot be governed by opinion polls or referendums.

I know that the Unionist people are not happy with the status quo, either. Those of us who have taken part in debates in this House late at night on unamendable orders know that direct rule is not a sensible way of governing Northern Ireland, if there can be any agreement on an alternative. We shall be discussing that later today.

Those who are content to rest indefinitely with the status quo, if such there be, have completely failed to grasp the sense of frustration, the degree of alienation, that exists among normally decent, law-abiding people who

find that they perish because there is no vision. At stake today is their confidence in constitutional politics. Not the Ombudsman, not even the courts, can restore that until they see some hope of a constitutional solution.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that while, of course, there are no simple solutions—only a fool would believe that there are simple solutions to the tragedy in Northern Ireland—it is a fact that not only was the minority community in Northern Ireland never asked for its consent over partition but that part of the whole argument is that the consent of the Irish people as a whole was never sought? Partition was imposed for one reason only, and that was to provide an in-built majority for the Unionists, and hence the six rather than the nine traditional counties of Ulster.

Mr. Archer: My hon. Friend knows the history of Ireland well, as I do, but my purpose today is not to be divisive. Subsequent contributions may deploy those arguments. But we should not spend too much time concentrating on the history of Northern Ireland. We might do better for a change to concentrate on the future.

Rev Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman not aware that the present boundary of Northern Ireland was discussed in and ratified by the Dail, was ratified by this House and Stormont and was lodged at the League of Nations? Therefore, it had acceptance by the elected representatives of the whole of Ireland.

Mr. Archer: If we embark on a discussion of the history of the matter, I suspect that we shall debate nothing else today. I had hoped that the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) had grasped the fact that the one thing that I did not wish to do was to open historic sores. We should concentrate on the future. If the hon. Gentleman prefers not to do that, then that is a matter between him and his conscience.

Our message to the Government is that we cannot adopt the role of a passive observer. If there is a tide in the affairs of men, it may be at the flood. If ever there was a moment when dialogue seemed possible and when only the most callous and blind remained wholly intransigent, that moment is now.

We do not expect the Loyalist people to announce their complete agreement with every proposition in the forum report. That report is essentially an invitation to talk, as Dr. FitzGerald has repeatedly reminded us and as the Secretary of State reminded us today. What is new about it is a recognition by the parties on the Nationalist side that the Unionist people have an identity that they are entitled to cherish and protect, and that they can legitimately ask that any solution should recognise their interests.

It has evoked a response from the Unionist side. "The Way Forward" is not likely to provide a definitive solution to all the differences. Those on the Nationalist side will say that it does not go far enough to meet their aspirations, but it demonstrates that on the Unionist side, too, there is recognition of the Nationalist identity and a willingness to discuss how that can be given effect.

Those two documents are the product of a generation which has learnt, and learnt the hard way. It is inconceivable that they would have been produced 20 years ago. So we call on the Government to invite the parties to the table. It may have to take the form of a formal

conference. It may require defensive opening statements with the television cameras concentrating on personalities seen entering and leaving. If it must have a dramatic launch, so be it, but, like the Secretary of State, I envisage it being an on-going discussion that gets down to business when the tumult and the shouting dies, and that it may last for a long time.

The issues will not be solved quickly and easily. There will be tough talking. I will settle for that if they are talking to one another and not past one another. Of course, neither side will offer its most tempting concessions at the outset. Each side will keep its bargaining factors until the end.

Mr. James Molyneux (Lagan Valley): The right hon. and learned Gentleman will have noticed that there is currently a little dispute taking place in this larger island about the future of the mining industry. Does he feel that it might be helpful if the Prime Minister were to invite the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal party, the Leader of the SDP—together perhaps, with Mr. Scargill providing the secretariat—to settle this little matter?

Mr. Archer: As the right hon. Gentleman asks me, one of my complaints about the Prime Minister is that she has abdicated responsibility for the settlement of that dispute. I should like the parties to be brought together for talks because I believe that that is what democratic constitutional politics are all about.

We do not want a conference with a spotlight, film crews and television cameras. We want the parties to be in a position in which they can talk quietly and get down to the serious issues between them. The leader in today's edition of *The Guardian*—which I consider to be a thoughtful piece—suggested that we should attempt in this debate to establish where the Unionists draw their bottom line. I shall be amazed if that is spelt out in this debate. There may be differences within the traditions as well as between them. Whether the rational elements or the hardliners on either side prevail may depend on whether the other side seems ready to respond with reason. Hysteria on one side of the divide is necessarily nurtured by hysteria on the other.

If I am asked what the agenda is to be, I have a problem—*[Interruption.]* Surely even Conservative Members can see what the problem is. Any attempt to spell out an agenda in the first place will be thought to be too limiting. I hope that nothing that the Secretary of State said today was intended to limit the agenda. I know what I should like the parties to agree on, but what I want to see does not matter and what Conservative Members want does not matter either. Let us recognise our limitations. Let nothing be excluded from the agenda. Let everything be on the table. Let there be a rolling agenda that unfolds as the talks proceed and as the parties come to understand one another.

Part of the problem will be the vocabulary itself. Some words are highly emotive, but when they are analysed the beast in the cage turns out to be a pussycat. We find that certain words have no rigid single meaning. We may find that the problems are not so intractable as it is fashionable to think. I have invited friends in both traditions to list the elements in their identity which they fear may be in danger, and the list is not usually a long one. At the end of the day it usually resolves itself into one factor on each side on which the two traditions appear to be

[Mr. Archer]

irreconcilable. There is the link with the United Kingdom on the Loyalist side, and on the Nationalist side it is the reunification of Ireland.

I am not persuaded that those two aspirations are irreconcilable. National sovereignty is a concept that in our generation is becoming more flexible in a hundred ways. Peoples in different territories find that their economies, their protection from pollution, their security and their prospects of peace are dependent upon arrangements with more than one Government. Some communities find no difficulty in claiming protection and offering their loyalty to more than one nation state.

The Secretary of State referred to the sacrifice and the heroism of the people of Northern Ireland in successive wars. I endorse that and I pay my full tribute to it. There are many churchyards in the Republic where tomb stones bear witness to the sacrifices that were made voluntarily by people on the other side of the divide. The tragedy of the Loyalist community is its growing conviction that its history and collective sacrifice have not gained it acceptance as an integral part of the United Kingdom by the 50 million inhabitants on this side of the water.

In Great Britain, Northern Ireland is seen all too often as a problem. It has never been treated as an integral part of the United Kingdom. Its relationship with London has been clouded over the years by anxiety and mistrust. Every tragedy has its comic side. The salvation of the people of Northern Ireland is that just when we come to think that the river of tears will never cease, their sense of humour breaks through.

Many years ago, one of my Loyalist friends gave me a copy of Robert Harbenson's book entitled "No Surrender". The younger generation will regard the book as rather dated, but in a perceptive account of his childhood and youth in Belfast is Robert Harbenson's description of the reaction in Sandy row to the coronation of King George VI. There was a complete outpouring of loyalty and the children at school were duly presented with a magnificent coronation book, which they greatly prized. It contained photographs of the Royal family. Unfortunately, their beliefs were shattered. One of the pictures showed the then Princess Elizabeth, who is now our Queen, being received by the Duke of Norfolk, and they had discovered that the Duke of Norfolk was a Catholic. "So it was all a con. We cannot trust the English. There was King Billy's successor shaking the hand of a Mick." It is an example of the tragic and chronic sense of imminent betrayal. If Northern Ireland were no longer seen as a problem, if the occasions for contention were removed, if the future were certain and if the relationship were seen as an opportunity and not a running sore, I believe that its links with this side of the water could possibly be happier and more relaxed.

Now we come to the hard bit. I have been asked what the Opposition will do if there are parties who are so afraid of the transformed and unknown world in which they will be living when the problems are solved, political leaders who are so uncertain about their own positions when people have no more need to fear, that they will not embark on discussions—people who are prisoners of old habits and old ways of thinking? I am asked what the Opposition would be urging the Government to do in those circumstances.

This is where I cannot win. If I decline to spell out the Opposition's view, it will be said that we have not thought the issue through. If I explain what we would do, I shall be accused of threatening. We have no wish to threaten. The tragedy of politics in Northern Ireland is that there have been too many threats. To indicate what we would do if there were no solution is not to threaten reasonable people who want a solution, any more than the Theft Act is a threat to honest people who do not progress to steal.

Of course we have contemplated the possibility that our appeal may fall on deaf ears. We have considered what we would do in that unattractive situation and we shall do no service to anyone by concealing our position. If it transpired that some parties were completely intransigent and that there was no prospect of breaking the deadlock by the people of Northern Ireland, we would urge the Government to initiate Government-to-Government discussions with the Republic. I am pleased that the Secretary of State has told us that he has that in mind in any event.

There are matters which common sense demands should be discussed. I could spell them out in detail but we have not reached the stage when it is necessary to do so. If I do spell them out, I shall be thought to be restricting the agenda for the talks that I really want to see take place—talks between the parties in Northern Ireland. But if I am pressed to give an example of areas of administration and policy where it does not make sense for the people in different parts of one island to treat one another as rivals, or even as enemies, and where the two Governments can offer their people a better future by working in partnership, I shall do so. I find it hard to see advantages in having two competing authorities concerned with attracting overseas investment into Ireland. I fail to see the sense of having two agricultural policies and two seats at the EC. Any dairy farmer will confirm that the force of my argument was strengthened a month ago. In a former incarnation I was involved in trying to resolve the problems that arise for those who have to enforce law and order in two separate jurisdictions.

As the Secretary of State said, I see nothing but sense in trying to establish an all-Ireland chamber in which members of this place and members of the Dail can meet for structured discussions. If I am asked whether I would include members of the Assembly, the answer is that I would leave that to the discussions. I do not want to preempt what is said, but I would be rather in favour of their inclusion.

Dr. Brian Mawhinney (Peterborough): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has left me genuinely confused. Did he say that he sees no point in having two seats at the EC? Does he mean that my right hon. Friend should represent Irish interests or that the Taoiseach should represent United Kingdom interests? What precisely did he mean by that statement?

Mr. Archer: Again, the danger is of being too rigid. What matters is being discussed at the EC. If agriculture is being discussed I should have thought it not beyond the wit of man to arrive at arrangements which would enable the voice of northern and southern Ireland to be heard as one. It has been done at the United Nations in the context of members of the EC. One does not have to believe that words have one inflexible meaning and that no analysis can ever change it.

Those are only examples. Discussion of all those possibilities could lead to a substantial change in people's lives. Let us not speculate where they would lead. Let them, at least, be discussed on their merits. What matters is that national boundaries are seen as the—if I could have the attention of the hon. Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) who kindly asked a question—artificial things that they are. Of course, I should hope that Governments would invite the representatives of the Northern Ireland people to their discussions. No one would want to settle these matters in the absence of the political leaders from Northern Ireland, but the choice would have to be theirs. No one can compel people to attend free discussions.

We ask the Government to make it clear that abstention will not veto the discussions. Those who choose to be absent can hardly complain afterwards that they were not present when the decisions were made.

It is significant how many people in Northern Ireland, from both traditions, are working for reconciliation. They believe that everyone in Northern Ireland should be working together to restore the economy and alleviate the economic distress of which the right hon. Gentleman has spoken. I believe that history will record their contribution more dramatically than they are reported today.

It must be in everyone's interest—with the possible exception of a few characters whose position and status depend upon human misery—that the conflict should be resolved. Everyone would be better off in a safer and more law-abiding society. Everyone would benefit if the wasted resources were directed to where everyone agrees that they are needed. Everyone could face the future with greater assurance if the uncertainties were resolved.

I was brought up to believe that a blessing awaits the peacemakers. Our heartfelt wish today for the Secretary of State is that it may rest upon his efforts.

4.41 pm

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): The view that I wish to put to the House was massively endorsed at the recent European elections. Unlike other candidates, I submitted to the electorate my view on the New Ireland Forum and my view of the constitutional position of Northern Ireland. Therefore, the view that I put before the House today has been massively mandated by the people of Northern Ireland, unlike the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume), who was also a candidate at that election and who made it clear that he was campaigning only on European matters, and that the response to the forum was a matter not for the Northern Ireland people but for the British Government. So much for the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. I shall return to the matter of consent in a moment.

I am glad that in his opening remarks the Secretary of State stated that he had changed his view about a political initiative and settlement as a means of doing away with terrorism in Northern Ireland. For a long time representatives from Northern Ireland have continually stated in the House that no political initiative or political compromise—if one can use the term—will rid Northern Ireland of the Provisional IRA and the INLA and their acts of terrorism.

Political developments in themselves will not bring peace to Northern Ireland. The wanton terrorism of the Provisional IRA denies peace to Northern Ireland. The logic of that belief is that the Provisional IRA's campaign

of terrorism can be assuaged or in some way defeated by some magical, political formula. Those of us who know something of the agony of Northern Ireland and its citizens know that that is dangerous nonsense.

We must face the fact that Government have a responsibility to deal with terrorism, because terrorism must be eradicated and not accommodated. Political advantage must be won by argument and not by blackmail. I am constrained to point out that, if and when any political settlement is arrived at, that moment will be when the IRA will unleash an even greater and more horrific campaign of terrorism against the people of Northern Ireland and against those engaged in a political settlement there. Her Majesty's Government will need to prepare long and hard if that day is to arrive. These are political realities that the House must face.

It is essential that any new Northern Ireland Administration should not conduct their business in isolation or excluded from interest in security. Arrangements must be made to ensure that the elected representatives of Northern Ireland have some voice in security matters. I welcome the fact that in Cmnd 7950 the Government recognise that need.

Dr. Garret FitzGerald appealed to the people of Northern Ireland and to the Unionists of Northern Ireland in his message printed in the *Belfast Telegraph* on Friday night. I should like to make a couple of comments on that appeal. His argument is spurious when he says that Unionists have rejected the forum because they have not had the opportunity, or, in many instances, the inclination, to read and study the text. Unionists in Northern Ireland have read and studied carefully the text of the New Ireland Forum report.

Dr. FitzGerald realised something of the gut reaction of Unionists when such proposals are put before them. When he spoke at a Trinity college law society seminar in February 1978, the present Taoiseach—it was not said by some Unionist or Paisleyite—the leader of the Fine Gael party said:

"Northern Protestants"—

you will pardon my reading as he said it, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

"would be bloody fools to join the Republic under its present Constitution."

He went on to say that when addressing Protestants from the Shankill road he had said that as a half northern Protestant himself he would not be happy about unification with people who had not shown themselves to be open-minded. The hon. Member for Foyle cannot object to my saying that we do not want to go down the forum road when the Prime Minister of the country had that comment to make. [*Interruption.*] I have read the report and I shall deal with it in a minute or two. It is a pity that some of those who are interrupting me did not read the whole report. [*Interruption.*] Well, if they have read it, I trust that they will continue to read it and that they will get enlightenment upon it.

Dr. FitzGerald was right when he said that the Republic and its Governments have not been open-minded in regard to the northern Protestants. I am concerned about the maintenance of the Protestant way of life on the island of Ireland. To some people, that is something that one is not supposed to do. In some places, one is not supposed to offer any criticism whatever of the politics of the Vatican or any criticism of the Roman Catholic Church.

[Rev. Ian Paisley]

I was castigated by the hon. Member for Foyle because, during the European election, I issued a leaflet dealing with that issue. But when a Roman Catholic Member of this House tells the people of Northern Ireland that they should enjoy going into Europe because Roman Catholic social doctrine will dominate the European Community, I can only say that I do not want to live under any system that is dominated by Roman Catholic social dogma. I shall continue, as an Ulster Protestant, to declare where I stand on these issues, whether this House likes it or whether anybody else likes it or not. If criticisms are made about my stand, I shall be happy to hear and to answer them.

I want to see the Protestant way of life continued and maintained on the island of Ireland. We are told in the forum that our Britishness will be respected. That is the joke of the century. We have already seen the respect for Britishness in the controversy over the name of Londonderry, the very city from which the hon. Member for Foyle comes. If on that issue the people of that city, led by the SDLP, could not allow the name "London" to remain as part of the name of the council, one wonders how much Britishness will be maintained in any united Ireland.

"Will you walk into my parlour?" said a spider to a fly". Ulster people are too dead fly to go into Haughey's parlour or to go into the parlour of Garret FitzGerald.

How has the Protestant ethos been maintained in the south of Ireland? How has the Protestant population been maintained in the Irish Republic? The answer is that 7 per cent. of it has been taken away. When the partition came about, approximately 10 per cent. of the people were Protestants. Today only 3 per cent. are Protestants. In other words, 200,000 Protestants have disappeared from the Irish Republic. The Protestant churches in the south of Ireland are always highlighting their concern over that issue. We have a rapidly diminishing Protestant population in the south. If it is the beautiful country that we are told it is, and if it is the country in which everybody prospers, is it not strange that the Protestant population should be almost eliminated from it?

In the report of the New Ireland Forum, some very interesting statements are made about the blessings that Protestants have experienced in the south of Ireland. I refer to chapter 3, headed "Origins of the Problem", on page 8, for those who have a copy of that interesting document. Paragraph 3.2 reads:

"However, the constitutional, electoral and parliamentary arrangements in the South specifically sought to cater for the minority status of Southern unionists and did so with considerable, if not total, success."

It is a wonderful degree of success. The Protestants numbered 10 per cent. when partition came about and are now only 3 per cent. of the population.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North) *rose*—

Rev. Ian Paisley: It is that attitude to the south that I want to highlight.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Rev. Ian Paisley: No. I shall not give way. I want to keep within a limited time so that other hon. Members may have the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Corbyn *rose*—

Rev. Ian Paisley: I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the hon. Member comment on the statements made by Mr. Seabright, as a member of the Belfast city council, towards Catholics in Northern Ireland and in the rest of Ireland? I do not hear the hon. Member condemning any of the disgraceful, terrible and shocking remarks that that person made.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I should like to nail the lie that the hon. Member has just—[*Interruption.*] I should like to say to him—[*Interruption.*] If he had read—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): Order. The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) knows that he must not attribute a lie to another hon. Member. He should withdraw his remark.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I will put it in another way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and say that the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) is a stranger to the truth in regard to the matter that he raised. [*Interruption.*] Statements have been made by members of the party to which the hon. Member belongs and no action has been taken.

Immediately the statement was made to which the hon. Member referred, I, as leader of the Democratic Unionist party, saw the councillor concerned. I pointed out to him—[*Interruption.*] If the hon. Gentleman has anything to say, I will give way to him.

Mr. Corbyn: Before the election?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Before the election. I met the gentleman concerned and pointed out to him that his statement was entirely contrary to the basis and constitution of the party of which he was a member, and could not be reconciled to it. He told me that he agreed with the constitution of the party to which he belonged. I said, "How could you when you have made a statement contrary to it?" Immediately the Assembly party of which he was a member met and expelled him from the Assembly party. [*Interruption.*] The Whip was taken from him and he was expelled from the Assembly party. Hon. Members should get their facts right. At an Executive meeting, he was suspended from membership until such time as the Executive shall deal further with him. I want to make that perfectly clear, and I unreservedly condemn—as I have already condemned—the statement that he made.

If there are hon. Members who want to push the Democratic Unionist party along a certain road, on their heads be it.

Mr. Corbyn *rose*—

Rev. Ian Paisley: I shall not give way again. [*Interruption.*] It was before the election. [*Interruption.*] Before and after he was suspended, as everybody in Northern Ireland knows. If the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that the people who voted for me did so because of that statement, he knows nothing whatever about the Protestant people of Northern Ireland. [*Interruption.*] Perhaps the hon. Gentleman's party should put up candidates in Northern Ireland and see how well they fare. They would need to insure themselves against lost deposits.

Before the intervention, I had referred to paragraph 3.2 of chapter 3 of the report. I will bring the House up to date about what is happening in Northern Ireland. A judge of the High Court in Northern Ireland, Lord Justice Gibson, had before him three police officers who were charged in regard to the shooting of an IRA man. He found them not

guilty, and he made a statement from the bench. As a result of that statement, Dublin interfered—the Roman Catholic hierarchy interfered. I have no objection to the hon. Member for Foyle, who is an elected representative—or any of the elected representatives of the national community—interfering. That is their prerogative and I make no objection to that. Outside people interfere. What happened? His holiday house in Donegal was burned and when the telephone message went through to the fire station it was not answered until the house was well ablaze. That is the sort of thing that is happening today in the Irish Republic. I do not want to go along that road, but if the hon. Member for Foyle wants to discuss that with me at any time, I shall take him down that road and he will see how dark and how bloody it is.

The statement from the New Ireland Forum immediately raises questions in the mind of every Unionist. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West, the Opposition Front Bench spokesman, was lecturing the Loyalists for not wanting to talk. I am ready to talk at any time with the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland. It was not my party that boycotted the Atkins conference. I was at the table, I shall not talk with Dublin, but I shall be talking with the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, there is an Assembly that was set up by the House as an elected body. It has a Report Committee which is now taking evidence from everyone who wants to give evidence about a way forward for Northern Ireland. The hon. Member for Foyle and the members of his party should be in that Assembly. They should be arguing with their own fellow Ulstermen on the Floor of the Assembly. If they cannot persuade their fellow Ulstermen, so be it. They have an opportunity. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Foyle laughs. If he thinks that he cannot persuade us, there is no consent and we should all go home and not bother about this document. That is what we shall be doing anyway, at the end of the debate.

I shall not be talking to a man who says that he will be murdering my kith and kin. I have just been castigated by the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) for my remarks about Councillor Seabright. Now he turns on me, after I have condemned those remarks, and says that I should put my arms round Gerry Adams, who is as much a murderer as any of the people who have done deeds of violence. I shall not be sitting down with Danny Morrison or Gerry Adams or any other Sinn Fein IRA members. Let me make that clear. That is where we draw the line.

The forum—

Mr. Merlyn Rees: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I am not a right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Rees: I should have known better, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would the hon. Gentleman ever sit down, or has he ever sat down with anybody from the Red Hand Commandos or the UVF during the Ulster workers' strike?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Yes. There is a difference between what the right hon. Gentleman has said and what he did. At one time, if my memory serves me right, he was the man who saw to it that they were no longer outlawed. He will remember that. He had better be very careful about his facts. I want to make it clear that, during the Ulster

workers' strike, both Official and Democratic Unionists were involved. It is a pity that there were not more men on the hillside.

Mr. Michael McGuire (Makerfield): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Time is short, but I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. McGuire: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, because I know that he is pressed for time. He said when referring to my hon. Friend the Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume), that he was prepared to sit down with elected representatives who were fellow Ulstermen. Why does he draw the line at Adams? After all, whether the hon. Gentleman likes it or not, he is an elected member of the Assembly.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I have made my position clear. The Government have taken that stand, as have members of the Opposition Front Bench. I think that the hon. Gentleman should realise that example is better than precept. When he converts the Members on his own Benches, he can start preaching his gospel to me and perhaps I shall hear him.

Paragraph 4.4 of the forum's report reads:

"various measures were introduced on the basis that they were essential to defeat terrorism and violent subversion, but they have failed to address the causes of violence and have often produced further violence."

The report simply says, "Let us deal with the causes of violence." But is violence justified? That is the question that northern Unionists must ask.

The report goes on, in paragraph 4.5, to say:

"Nationalists, for the most part, do not identify with the police and the security forces. It is clear that the police will not be accepted, as they are in a normal democratic society, by the nationalist section of the community nor will they themselves feel confident in their relations with nationalists, until there is a change in the political context in which they have to operate."

The Eire Government are supposed to be friendly. In fact, they have the Presidency of the EC and Peter Barry is the President of the Council of Ministers. Yet the report says that, until there is a change in the political context, the nationalist people are justified in their attitude to the forces of the Crown and the forces of law and order.

Mr. Winnick: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I cannot give way any more.

That is the sort of statement that keeps the nationalist people from identifying themselves.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): But it is true.

Rev. Ian Paisley: The hon. Lady says that it is true, but who protects the nationalist community and goes to its aid? Who gives them the necessary cover? Is it not the police? In one case, the IRA was prepared to surrender to the police but not to the British Army. We know the IRA's attitude to the police, yet we find that type of statement in the document.

Mr. Winnick: The hon. Gentleman should read out paragraph 3.19.

Rev. Ian Paisley: The hon. Gentleman can read the whole document if he likes in his speech. At the moment I am making my speech.

Before I come to the matter of consent, I must say that I am glad that the hon. Gentleman defines his idea of consent, because that is not the same as the idea of consent

[Rev. Ian Paisley]

put forward by the forum or by Charles Haughey. When Mr. Haughey pronounced upon the forum report he said that nobody had the right to impede or to deny the unity of Ireland, which is a natural, logical thing. The people who voted for me and sent me to the House have the right, to impede, and I shall do everything in my power to impede, any road to a united Ireland, as will the vast majority of the citizens of Northern Ireland. Mr. Haughey made it clear that the only thing that the Protestants would have a right to discuss were the structures within that united Ireland. That is not consent at all. That consent is not forthcoming. If it had been forthcoming, the hon. Member for Foyle could have put it to his people, come to the House and said, "I have the consent." However, no one in the House really believes that consent to this document is forthcoming.

What does the document hold out? It holds out a unitary state and joint sovereignty or some sort of confederation, which would take Northern Ireland out of the United Kingdom and put it into some all-Ireland settlement. That is anathema to the people who sent me to the House. They want no part or lot in it, and they will not have it. I am surprised that there are Members of the House who would deny us the democratic right to impede progress towards the unity of Ireland. The unity of Ireland is not a natural, logical thing anyway, for Ireland never was united except when it was under the United Kingdom. "Ireland a nation, as Ireland a notion." Everyone knows that who has read history. All sorts of myths are thrown out about this issue and about a united Ireland. We should come down to the stark reality.

I refer again to the report. It states on page 28, paragraph 5.3:

"However, Britain must help to create the conditions which will allow this process to begin."

The arm-twisting must start. The report continues:

"The British Government have a duty"—

the House is being told what its duty is—

"to join in developing the necessary process that will recognise these realities and give effect to these requirements and thus promote reconciliation between the two major traditions in Ireland, and to make the required investment of political will and resources."

We should leave our cheque book behind when we go. The report further states:

"The British and Irish Governments should enter into discussions to create the framework and atmosphere necessary for this purpose."

With such statements, the forum talks about consent. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) says that if the people of Northern Ireland do not consent the two Governments should go ahead on their own. I thought that the whole basis was of consent, but it seems that, if the people do not consent, in their absence the two Governments should go down this particular road.

Mr. Archer: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman was not listening carefully to what I said. Does he accept that there is a clear distinction between consent to unification and consent to any initiative of any sort whatsoever?

Rev. Ian Paisley: As long as the initiative is not to reach the goal, but if the goal is a united Ireland Unionists will oppose it vigorously. This is a matter of life and death to the Unionists. If any attempt is made to push the Unionist population down that road, it will be resisted unto death. Let no one be under any illusion about that.

The New Ireland Forum must be answered from a Unionist point of view, but I should like to refer to "The Way Forward". Do we just stay where we are, or do we move forward? There is a lobby for peace among the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland. Why should there not be a lobby? I have followed too many funeral processions, I have held too many widows' hands and I have patted too many orphans' heads not to know the agony that my people have gone through. They are not only Protestant but Roman Catholic bereaved ones. I have received a lot of stick from Unionists for even going to their homes.

I know what I am talking about. There is a desire for peace. That peace can come only within Northern Ireland. It is up to the elected representatives of the Northern Ireland people to get together and seek a way forward out of this impasse, for an impasse it is, and there is no doubt about it. It is said that some people want violence. The happiest day for me will be when Northern Ireland returns to peace and my stay in politics is concluded. I never wanted to be in politics. [Interruption.] Hon. Members may laugh; I do not mind. The call of the people forced me into it. I have always made it clear that, if we return to peace and have a Government for Northern Ireland who bring stability, I shall be happy to bow out. Who would not be happy? A politician's life in Northern Ireland is no easy road. It is no easy road for the politician's wife or his family. That goes right across the religious and political divide. Who wants to choose a life like that?

We are at an impasse. The only way forward is for the elected representatives of the Northern Ireland people to come together. I regret that the SDLP has not seen its way to come into the Assembly. I have said that publicly and personally, and I shall continue to say it. However, I am prepared to talk to the elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland and to try to find some way whereby we can bring hope for a future when there will be something for our kids and young ones growing up, and some sort of political and economic stability. I say that not because I need to say it but because it comes from my heart.

While I must answer the New Ireland Forum report and deal with the things that are said against the Unionist people, let me say that there is a real desire for peace. If the two parts of Ireland are to live in peace, they will do so only when there is mutual respect. If the Dublin Government are really sincere, there are two things that they can do. First, they can enter into an extradition treaty. They can ensure that those who commit crimes in Northern Ireland find no safety or sanctuary in their territory. If they are not prepared to send them back to Northern Ireland, why not send them back to some other part of the United Kingdom? I believe that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. If that is the Irish Government's grave objection, let those people be sent to some other part of the United Kingdom. The Dublin Government must do something about that.

Secondly, the Dublin Government must do something about their claim over Northern Ireland territory. They say that we are not really part of the United Kingdom. They say that their laws, if we could enforce them, are really made for us as well. They say that the 1937 constitution is not acceptable to any Protestant, for it is embedded in the moral theology of the Church of Rome on divorce and other matters. I do not care what constitution the South has. I do not care how they develop. I do not care what

they do. I make no claims on their territory. Ulster is saying to the South, "Please let us alone and let us remain within the United Kingdom. Let us develop in the way that we wish and you can develop in the way that you wish."

I believe that if both parts of Ireland took that road the time would come again when Government Departments in both North and South could get together as they did in the old Stormont days on matters from which both could benefit. That is the only way. It may be a tiny step, but it is the right one. I hope that we shall take a step down that road today.

5.29 pm

Mr. James Molyneux (Lagan Valley): Contrary to general belief, those of us who represent Northern Ireland constituencies have never resented participation in our debates by Members representing constituencies in Great Britain. Indeed, as representatives of an integral part of the United Kingdom, we welcome contributions to these debates from other parts of the kingdom. To assist other hon. Members, I shall speak on behalf of all my colleagues, none of whom intends to take up further time in today's debate. It is possible, of course, that more speeches from Ulster Members might make the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) less keen to chair his proposed all-party conference, but that may be the price that we have to pay.

Each year, around midsummer, Parliament has the opportunity to take stock of the part of the kingdom that we represent. That survey usually takes place in a debate on a motion to renew the Northern Ireland Act 1974 and the mechanisms whereby the Government and the House govern Northern Ireland for a further year. On this occasion, that motion will come later in the day, but the present debate on the Adjournment is a paving operation for that motion and allows the House to advise the Government on how to govern and administer our part of the United Kingdom for the next 12 months.

Last Thursday, the Leader of the House listed various documents which he believed might be relevant to today's business. An Irishman might be tempted to say that some of them were more equal than others. Certainly, some are more relevant than others. In terms of the coming 12 months, the report of the New Ireland Forum is the least relevant of all. Before I am accused of rejecting that report without reading it, I should make it clear that we have indeed read it. We take the same realistic view as was expressed by the Government in their statement on the day of publication, when they said:

"The Government stands by its undertaking that Northern Ireland shall not cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland and remains willing to give effect to any majority wish which might be expressed in favour of unity. But Unionist opposition to Irish unity is to the principle rather than the form. As the Report acknowledges, consent has to be freely given."

The Government then added this further comment, which was reflected in the words of the Secretary of State today:

"And there is no reason to expect such consent to a change in sovereignty in Northern Ireland in any of the three forms suggested in the Report."

That statement did not attempt to conceal the Government's disappointment at the forum's failure to achieve its main objective of providing a new approach. As the Government have stated, three options were listed, all designed to break up the United Kingdom and all requiring the consent of the greater number of people in Northern Ireland.

The report, and, perhaps more significantly, the subsequent clarifying statements, however, are shot through with unspoken admissions that such consent will not be given in the foreseeable future. That central weakness was spotted immediately by the outside world. The reaction was perhaps typified by the anti-Unionist Member of this House who, on the very day of publication, lamented that the authors of the report had made it impossible for any section of the House to help them.

If the prospect was bleak on the day of publication, sympathetic souls have been plunged into despair by the emerging revelation that the three options are not, and never were, real alternatives. Mr. Haughey and his party, the largest party in the Irish Republic and which, but for proportional representation, would form the Government of the Republic, reasserted as recently as last Friday that for them there is only one solution: a unitary state—by consent, of course. As the Secretary of State has pointed out, paragraph 5.10 shows willingness to discuss other views, but we must ask ourselves what is the value of that willingness if we are always to be brought back to Mr. Haughey's insistence on that one solution—a unitary state. The time for dialogue, to which the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West referred, might also be thrown away.

At this point, it may be appropriate to explain the difference between the English and the Irish meaning of the word "consent." I cannot help feeling that the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West did less than justice to his own party. He was far too modest, so I shall use the British Labour party to illustrate my point. When that party, with all its integrity, talks about consent, it means the free, cheerful and, to coin a phrase, full-hearted consent of the Ulster people to leaving this nation and joining another. Mr. Haughey and perhaps all the other parties in the Republic, however, interpret consent as something quite different—as agreement resulting from pressure and coercion. I do not suggest that they would contemplate using the same methods as the terrorists, but their problem is that they share the same objective. To attain their objective of a United Ireland, they must use or benefit from pressure in other forms, which take the shape of constitutional devices and economic measures.

Before any realistic co-operation can evolve, the forum parties must be convinced that free consent will not be achieved in their lifetime and that forced consent is repugnant to the British people. Until the English meaning of the word "consent" is fully accepted on both sides of the Irish sea, the limited progress possible must be confined to Northern Ireland. There can be no experimenting with institutional structures at any international level, for the simple reason that these would be seen as—and would, indeed, become—thumbscrews to compel consent.

On Saturday, the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr. Barry, during a visit to Belfast, repeated his declaration that the Irish Government accepted that they had a responsibility to make arrangements with the British Government to give recognition to Irish aspirations. At times, he has been even more explicit and proclaimed that he has a duty to protect the interests of Irish nationalists living under British rule. To be fair to the man, I must say that he has shown that concern by visits not just to Northern Ireland but to large centres of Irish population in England.

[Mr. James Molyneaux]

Before considering the type of safeguard required and, presumably, the kind of safeguard in Mr. Barry's mind, the House must consider exactly what disadvantages are experienced by the nationalist minority of much less than half a million people in Northern Ireland. For 12 long years they have been ruled directly by this House and by British Governments — for seven of those years by Conservative Governments and for five by Labour Governments. Do they somehow feel oppressed by British rule and British parliamentary government in a way in which their fellow Irish co-religionists in Great Britain do not? Over 60 years ago, Carson, who was then the leader of the Ulster Unionists, begged the House of Commons not to force Protestants to govern Roman Catholics. The House ignored Carson's plea. The forum ignores the fact that Protestants have not governed anybody for the past 12 years. Parliament now holds the Secretary of State and his Ministers accountable for all legislative, executive and administrative acts and decisions. Indeed, Parliament controls those functions in Northern Ireland far more closely than in England, Scotland and Wales. The forum has not told us where and how Parliament has failed in its duty.

In the absence of any valid answers, we can only assume that the desire for some Anglo-Irish institutional arrangements represents a fall-back position of some kind, now that the three original options are seen to be non-starters. As a fall-back position, they are far from harmless. They will be recognised for what they are — for devices for obtaining indirectly what cannot be won by frontal assault. Any such experiments will make it impossible to encourage co-operation and participation within Northern Ireland itself. That would be the price to be paid for international structures such as were hinted at by the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West. The price would be the destruction of the improved political climate to which the Secretary of State referred this afternoon; and the tragedy would be that the same international arrangements would bring no practical benefit whatever to the nationalist people in Northern Ireland.

I turn to the possibilities for co-operation and participation in Northern Ireland. This is perhaps the most important aspect of our deliberations today. Both the Dublin Government and the British Government should rid themselves of the notion that the restoration of limited powers to elected representatives would be a bonus only for the Unionists, and that a balancing concession would have to be made to the nationalists. The truth is that limited powers, under strict supervision by the Secretary of State, would benefit both Unionists and nationalists equally, whereas anything seen as a concession for one side would perpetuate suspicion and distrust.

We are now in the real world of the subject of the business on today's Order Paper. The forum report has told us mainly what cannot be done. I point to a more promising path. On the occasion of the tenth renewal of the 1974 Act, we recognise that we have a duty to be positive and constructive. In "The Way Forward", the Official Unionist party has sketched out a practical outline plan which should at least start the process of enabling elected representatives, Unionist and nationalist, to deliver a real service to those who elect them. The tenor and terms of our document offer the nationalist minority in Ulster

guarantees far superior to anything that the Republic could offer to Unionists in a united Ireland. A key phrase, of which the Secretary of State has taken note and repeated today, declares that

"it is the responsibility of the majority to persuade the minority that the Province is also theirs."

Our paper has outlined a strategy for participation without abandonment of principle. In contrast to the forum report, the proposals in "The Way Forward" could be realised and implemented in the immediate future. It seemed to us that, with the Assembly in being, it might make sense to give that body the task of administering the Macrory-type powers. The Report Committee of the Assembly has at last got down to considering that possibility, and others.

I recognise the obstacles. There is a school of thought that maintains that the Assembly ought to remain in its present powerless state in the hope that Parliament will change its mind and, in one way or another give, Stormont powers to the three pro-union parties in the Assembly without power sharing.

Realistically, I have also to recognise that this Parliament would be reluctant to say the least, to grant powers to the Assembly without the participation of constitutional nationalism. While it is all very well to urge the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour party to take his party into the Assembly, we have to be fair to the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) and recognise that he and his party were elected on the basis of a pledge to stay out of the Assembly on the ground of its unworkability. I took the same view on unworkability and, two years on, the hon. Member for Foyle and I have both been proved correct in our assessment.

However, I should not like to think that we need wait any longer for some forward movement. We cannot afford to sit still and ignore the local government elections, which are only 10 months away. Councillors are already considering whether to stand for re-election. Other public-spirited persons are being invited to stand for the new wards just created by the local government boundary commissioners. Both groups will be deciding in the near future whether it is worth occupying council seats, in view of the very limited powers retained by district councils. Until now, hope of the return of worthwhile powers has enabled us to retain many councillors of real ability. There is little prospect of their remaining for another term without the prospect of an increased role in serving the local communities by which they are elected.

In the final paragraph of our discussion paper, we say:

"The Ulster Unionist Party recognises that its proposal may be considered by some to be too modest, but it has watched while grander and more ambitious schemes have failed. The Party's objective is to find a level at which consensus may be obtained to effect a beginning in the reconciliation of the divided communities."

For the past 15 years we have suffered from repeated mistaken attempts to find so-called solutions, and to seek solutions on far too ambitious a scale. High-level initiatives by British Governments are just as futile as interference by Dublin Governments. I beg both to read and heed the final sentence of the paragraph from which I have quoted:

"Roads owe no allegiance to those who travel upon them and, for the traveller, such roads are neither green nor orange but only good or bad. It would be a start if the travellers were given a chance to repair them."

That is in line with what I have said about making a modest start, but it has a wider symbolic meaning. All the

[Mr. James Molyneux]

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people of Northern Ireland are the travellers. I believe that they are now in the mood to begin the work of repair. I ask the Government and Parliament to give us the opportunity to do so. I say to other parties particularly those of another tradition, that we are more than willing — we are eager — to join them in getting down to work.

5.39 pm

Sir John Biggs-Davison (Epping Forest): We are debating the Adjournment of the House, yet it is strange that this discussion of the future of a part of the United Kingdom is concentrated around a document that emanates from another state. I shall not make too much of that as I took a small part in the New Ireland Forum, as did the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley).

The New Ireland Forum was in large measure intended to benefit the SDLP and to aid the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume), whom we are delighted to see in his place, in competing with Sinn Fein for the Nationalist vote in the European Assembly election. It is understandable, therefore, that no Unionist party took part in the forum. The same was true for the Alliance party in Northern Ireland. For my Back-Bench part, I thought that the Unionist case ought not to go unheard. I made my written submission, which the Forum did not publish. I am not sure why and wish that it had. I was the only mainland Member of Parliament to appear in Dublin castle for questioning by the leaders of the three Southern and one Northern Ireland parties. I do not think that the hon. Member for Hammersmith appeared in person.

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): I did, if that is what the hon. Gentleman is asking.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. From such sketchy records as I have received, I thought that he had not. I am delighted that he did. I went in my individual capacity. Unlike the hon. Gentleman, I am not a spokesman with responsibilities.

With reason, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State praised the tone of the forum report. By the standards of Irish and Anglo-Irish political controversy, it is emollient. It is possible to read good will, at least between the lines. It attempts to understand and allow for Unionist fears and aspirations. Unfortunately, however, all three of the options proposed—a unitary state, a federation or confederation or a joint British and Irish authority for the North—are options that Unionists, by definition, cannot accept. Nor are the options new. Indeed, there is not much new about the New Ireland Forum report. Those options have been in circulation at least since the days of de Valera.

Much has been made of the forum's acknowledgement in its report of the principle that there can be no change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland without popular consent. That, too, is nothing new. In a communiqué that was issued in December 1972 after the Sunningdale conference, the Dublin Government said that they:

"fully accepted and solemnly declared that there would be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status".

The majority who do not desire such a change are by no means all Protestant. There is neither theological nor historical warrant for equating the religio-ethnic with the political divide. Leaving aside the border poll of 1973, in which there was much intimidation of a section of the

community by the Provisional IRA, from 1921 onwards, elections and opinion polls have shown that rather fewer than 40 per cent. of northern Catholics are opposed to the link with Great Britain.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State referred to the Irish identity. There is much mention of it in the report. I hope that my right hon. Friend understands that there are people who consider themselves Irish rather than British except that they are loyal British subjects. Not all people who consider themselves Irish consider themselves Nationalist. There is the old story of a lady who complained to a former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland saying, "The trouble with you English is that you do not want us Irish to remain British."

The forum report contradicts itself. It asserts that "the new Ireland which the Forum seeks can come about only through agreement and must have a democratic basis" and then it chides the British Government for "the guarantee contained in section 1 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973".

Was not that guarantee underwritten at Sunningdale by the Irish Government in their full acceptance and solemn declaration of the will of the majority as the pre-requisite to any change in the constitution of Northern Ireland? The report says:

"Britain must help to create the conditions which will allow this process"—
the building of a new Ireland—
"to begin."

The implication is, although the Opposition who take a like view would probably deny it, that the loyal majority should be cajoled or coerced into the "new Ireland". The right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneux) spoke of thumbscrews, but when we take Unionist opinion for what it is and when we think of the huge vote scored by the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) in the European Assembly election — that itself a reaction to the forum—we must conclude that anyone who wanted to achieve the dishonourable end of expelling loyal subjects from the United Kingdom would exert immense political, probably military and economic pressure to do so.

The economics of a new Ireland were the subject of a document that accompanied the forum report. It is entitled, "The Macroeconomic Consequences of Integrated Economic Policy, Planning and Co-ordination in Ireland." It was prepared by a Dublin firm of economic consultants and includes a commentary by Professor Norman Gibson of the New University of Ulster and Professor Dermot McAleese of Trinity college, Dublin. They concluded that the withdrawal of "the British Subvention" to Northern Ireland would

"require what can only be described as catastrophic economic adjustments".

If Northern Ireland is not to be part of the United Kingdom, the whole subvention comes into question. The immediate result would be a

"loss of income equivalent to about 8 per cent. of the GDP of the combined economies".

That could produce, "as a first-round effect . . . a fall in disposable income of around £2,000 million".

Continuing losses and higher unemployment—as if it were not high enough already in both parts of Ireland—could not be offset by foreign borrowing as it would be, "doubtful whether foreigners would be prepared to lend even if the authorities were willing to borrow".

[Sir John Biggs-Davison]

Those people who wrongly style Northern Ireland as Britain's last colony can cite cases of the United Kingdom being more generous to former colonies than to dependencies. We often feel guilty about rewarding loyalty. However, few people will agree to the impudent suggestion that is implicit or explicit in the reported statements of some Irish politicians to the effect that the abandonment of Northern Ireland should be financed by the British taxpayer. I do not believe that there is any chance of that, and I gained that impression from the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. So much in this report is Utopian. I sometimes wonder whether a united Ireland is very much more than a political gambit. In the Republic, proportional representation makes for precarious Governments ever looking over their shoulders to small extremist factions, and there is a lesson there for us.

Mr. John Hume (Foyle): Can the hon. Gentleman point to the evidence that would suggest that a united Northern Ireland is more possible than a united Ireland?

Sir John Biggs-Davison: A united Northern Ireland is most attainable if Northern Ireland is fully integrated with Great Britain, for the reasons that were so eloquently given by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley. The way forward was shown by the right hon. Member when he referred to the discussion paper of that name published by Ulster Unionist Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. I was glad that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State pointed out that the Taoiseach recognised the importance of this paper. The paper asks that the problems of the Province should be solved within it, with "mutual recognition" by "the two communities" of "each other's hopes and fears".

The authors of the report propose a more democratic system of local government. The right hon. Member for Lagan Valley said that it was necessary, for the morale and standard of those coming forward to be elected to the local authorities, to have an enlargement of council powers.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State praised the work of the Assembly, and no one wishes to decry that. When I compare the concept of devolution to a new Stormont with the concept in the document "The Way Forward", I look at the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume), who is willing to discuss these matters with Unionists here in the House of Commons but is not willing to discuss them with Unionists in the Northern Ireland Assembly. As the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley reminded us, my Roman Catholic co-religionists are far safer under this sovereign House than under a devolved Assembly across the water. That, according to those who have always attacked Stormont, is the lesson that should be drawn from Stormont.

As for the Republic, article 2 of the 1937 constitution—referred to by the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley)—claiming all Ireland, is the major stumbling block in North-South co-operation. I pointed this out in my submission to the New Ireland Forum. Article 2 is an encouragement to those who pursue the same irredentist claim by physical force and terror. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State disclaimed any intention of having a new initiative. So many have been lethal and futile. If we want an initiative anywhere, this

is it. The Irish Republic has shown that it is perfectly able, after a referendum, to change its constitution, and this is the necessary change.

Suppose that we were going to give ourselves a written constitution in the United Kingdom—the Lord Chancellor for one favours it—it might be thought provocative if such a constitution enshrined a claim to that part of Ireland that departed from the United Kingdom, thus partitioning the island of Ireland. However, that would be more preposterous than article 2 of the Irish constitution.

At the forum, I cited the late Professor Lyons's 1978 Ford lecture at Oxford, in which he said that:

"the recognition of difference, especially among Irishmen, is a pre-requisite for peaceful co-existence."

I went on to say that there is the partition of maps and minds. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) said that frontiers were unimportant. Kevin O'Higgins did not think so. He said:

"It is useless to seek to abolish the Boundary in law until we have abolished it in our hearts."

Which, then, is more perverse—to seek to haul down the Union flag on Stormont castle or to aspire to raise it again over Dublin castle?

We hear it contended that Ireland is only one small island, naturally intended to be a single political unit. It is also said that Unionists, with or without a capital U, are but a minority in this island of Ireland. That is to argue geography against history, maps against chaps, that Spain should re-occupy Portugal, and that American Republicans should be third time lucky and annex the kingdom of Canada, while meanwhile Canada should have Alaska.

The forum did not take that position, and its report is full of the principle of consent. When self determination—this is the answer to the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick)—disrupts an imperial unity such as was imposed from England upon Ireland, there are bound to be those who are left under uncongenial rule, on the wrong side of the border. What power sharing was ever offered to those forgotten southern Irish Loyalists? An attempt was made in 1925 to draw a more generally acceptable border. It failed. There are some who would try again, but it takes two to repartition.

There was one great omission from the report. It failed to propound another option—the option of Irish unity through the unity of these islands. Perhaps a British isles forum could propose forms of confederacy, if not a joint authority in Dublin, as a possible alternative. My submission to the forum contained examples of what the Prime Minister has called our "unique relationship", which is closer than the former Commonwealth relationship and our present relationship within the Community. We have a common travel area, we now have reciprocal voting rights and we have a virtual common citizenship. How many Irish citizens and Irish passport holders are there living within the United Kingdom, happily and of their own free will?

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State spoke of the commemoration in Belfast of the battle of the Somme. Beside the Ulster Division there was the Irish Division, and it so happens that Major Redmond, brother of John Redmond the Nationalist leader, and himself a Nationalist, fell on the Somme, close to the Ulstermen. These are things that we remember as links that survive the partition of Ireland and the separation of a part of the former United

Kingdom from the rest. Let us build an ever closer association between the two sovereign powers and the commingled cognate people in these islands. The only conceivable United Ireland is one that is part of islands united once again.

5.58 pm

Mr. John Hume (Foyle): I am grateful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the one Member of the House who was a member of the New Ireland Forum and a proud author of that report, that you have called me early in the debate.

Reference was made earlier to the recent election in the North which took place on 14 June. As the Secretary of State outlined at the beginning, the reason for the debate today and for the New Ireland Forum report is the urgency of the situation in the north of Ireland. On that day, around the close of poll, I was in my house in Derry when I heard a commotion in the street. I looked out of the window and saw a group of youths in masks filling bottles with petrol. I was not sure whether, in the heat and emotion at the end of election day, the target was my home or a passing military vehicle. Such occurrences are not unusual in front of my house.

There are 650 Members in the House. If I ventured to ask them what they would do in such circumstances, 649 of them would tell me that they would pick up the telephone and ring the police. I did not do that. I knew that had I done so I would simply have made a bad situation worse. That is a stark reality of life in areas of Northern Ireland that do not give their allegiance to the union.

That situation is described by different people in different ways. I am the only political leader in the north of Ireland who does not go round with a gun in his pocket and who is not driven around by armed policemen. That is because apart from my objection to the trappings of violence when I am preaching non-violence, any policeman who would drive me where I live or stand outside my door would be signing his death warrant.

That lack of order in the society that I represent has been described with fancy words. The most recent is "alienation". The search for peace and order on the streets, which the people of those areas want more than anything else, will not be achieved by force. It will not be achieved by armed soldiers or police. We have had all that. We have had 20,000 troops on our streets, armed policemen and the toughest emergency legislation in any civilised country in western Europe. The result has not been order on our streets. The search for order must be based on what order is based on in every civilised democratic society—political consensus.

What I am saying is underlined by the fact that in Northern Ireland today we have a generation of 18-year-olds who have lived through the past 15 years who know nothing except violence and soldiers on the streets, and who, having built up resentment to that type of society, have nothing but unemployment staring them in the face in our desperate economic situation, making them easy meat for recruitment by paramilitary organisations. That in turn makes a bad situation even worse. That is what makes the problem urgent and that is what gives urgency to the report of the New Ireland Forum.

My colleagues from other parts of Northern Ireland from the other tradition have concerns as well. Their constituents are being murdered because they wear a uniform which people, claiming to be Irish Republicans,

say makes them legitimate targets. Members of the UDR and RUC are seen as defenders of their tradition. Therefore, their murder is rightly seen as sectarian murder.

If one goes to the city of Belfast one finds a massive brick wall built by the Housing Executive to separate Protestant from Catholic and to protect them from one another. That reality does not just represent the sense of urgency but is a major challenge to everybody involved in that problem. That major challenge is to recognise, above all, that all attitudes, whether unionist, nationalist or British, have brought us where we are today. If we are to get anywhere there must be reassessment.

The purpose of the New Ireland Forum is to begin a reassessment of nationalist attitudes, not, as was so contemptuously suggested by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs Davison), to throw out a lifeline to my party or to any other party. We do not need such a lifeline. The New Ireland Forum is a serious attempt to face up to a serious problem in Ireland. When the representatives—the democratic voice of three quarters of the people of Ireland—speak about a serious problem in that island, the House had better listen. It will be giving another message to Ireland if it rejects the democratic voice of nationalist Ireland and does not give serious attention to what it has to say.

I do not claim that everybody in the nationalist tradition in Ireland is all virtue and that everybody else is to blame. We have only to look at our past approach to recognise the mistakes. We have only to look at the narrowness of Irish nationalism, its definition, its sectionalism, and its exclusionism, tied solely to the Gaelic and Catholic traditions and exclusive of other traditions represented in the House from Northern Ireland, to recognise that that narrowness of itself is divisive. It is pushed to its extremes by those who tell us that the height of Irish patriotism is the right not only to die for it but to kill fellow Irishmen for it as well. It is clear that there is need for a massive rethink in that tradition, and that was what the forum was all about.

It is long past the time when Irish nationalist attitudes should be rooted in the attitudes of the 1920s or earlier. That applies to everybody in the House. Nobody would run a shop on the corner of a street on the methods of 1920. Nobody would run the economy of a country on the methods of 1920. Nobody should run the politics of Ireland or anywhere else in 1984 on the attitudes of 1920, to say nothing of the attitudes of the 1690s.

The unionist tradition is represented strongly in the House. My tradition is under-represented because of the undemocratic voting system that elects people to this House. The unionist tradition in Ireland, as we have heard again today, has always stood for the integrity of Irish Protestantism and for the protection of that tradition within Ireland. That is a noble and laudable objective that deserves the support of everyone in Ireland because any country is richer for its diversity. Any country that does not recognise that the basis of unity is diversity recognises nothing.

My quarrel with the political leadership of that tradition, is simply that the methods used to protect that integrity have been the wrong methods—that of holding all power in their own hands without surrendering an inch. Again, the mirror image is ourselves alone. All power in our hands. That is an inherently violent attitude that can lead only to conflict. There must be a reassessment and a recognition that that tradition is best protected by

[Mr. John Hume]

examining how best to share the island of Ireland with those with whom they share that piece of earth, and what structures, agreements and arrangements can bring real unity based on agreement and acceptance of diversity.

Of course, there are two documents in that tradition that are mentioned in the Order Paper as "other documents". Indeed, the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneux) referred to "The Way Forward", whose contents are not particularly exciting. However, its tone is new, in the sense that it is completely different from any other document from a Unionist party. Some have said that it is a tactical document that is designed to offset the impact of the New Ireland Forum. But I am prepared to recognise it as a genuine document, because I believe that any movement—even only a centimetre—out of the trenches in Northern Ireland should be encouraged. If that party's leaders believe what they say when they claim that they want to accommodate the different loyalties in Ireland, I am ready to talk with them.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) is not in the Chamber. But the document entitled, "The Unionist Case" would have been better entitled, "The Way Backwards" or "Towards 1690", because it has absolutely nothing to offer. As I expected, we heard about the size of the hon. Gentleman's vote in the recent European elections and about how it must govern the British Government's thinking. But we have heard all that before. This problem came in with the playing of the Orange card in 1912. The political representatives of Unionism threatened that they would resist by violence if the British Government did not do as they wished. That overthrew a democratic decision in 1912, and taught Unionists the lesson that if they defied and threatened a British Government, that Government would back down. It also taught others in the nationalist tradition a lesson—that if hon. Members win by democratic means in this House, that decision will be overturned anyway. That lesson gave birth to those who believe in violence and force.

Those two attitudes lie at the heart of the Northern Ireland problem and its intractability today, and were both repeated in 1974 in the Ulster Workers' Council strike. Every time a British Government move towards change, they are faced with the same threats from the same sources. The hon. Member for Antrim, North says that the Government do not have the consent of the Unionists. Many people talk about consent, but consent cannot be unqualified. We are told that people voted on the basis of opposition to the New Ireland Forum report. The Democratic Unionist party put an election advertisement in the Northern Ireland press, which was turned down by the *Belfast Telegraph* as being to sectarian. This is how votes were sought:

"Do you know that the Pope has appointed Mary as the 'Madonna' of the Common Market and views the EEC as the work of Divine Providence."

That is what the hon. Member for Antrim, North said. Indeed, the Prime Minister will be interested in the next few lines of the advertisement, which state:

"Do you know . . . that Mr. John Gummer the Chairman of the Conservative Party has stated that the Common Market will help to take the Protestants back into the Church of Rome. (See copy of Gummer's letter in 'The EEC and the Vatican' available from 256 Ravenhill Road, Belfast)."

Furthermore, the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) was said to be a member of the British Conservative group in the European Parliament and so associated with Gummer's pro-Vatican stance. The hon. Member for Antrim, North said that people should vote for him instead of the right hon. Gentleman for that reason. That is the sort of thing that people voted for.

If consent is refused because of prejudice, we cannot allow prejudice to determine political change. I could cite further examples of such prejudice. For example, Lisburn council is run by the Democratic Unionist party. It does not have many powers, but one of them is to collect the dustbins. However, it refuses to collect them on the Poleglass housing estate because it will not collect Catholic bins. The council will not give its consent to that. Under public health legislation, the Minister has to force the council to collect them. If that council will not collect Catholic bins, who can ask me to sit in an assembly with such people when its purpose is to achieve power sharing? Does the Secretary of State think that I have lost my marbles, or that my electorate would think anything of me if I did that?

If consent is refused, reasonable reasons must be given, and they must not be based on prejudice. The veto handed over in the British guarantee to Unionism has been extended to a veto against all change, and has thus paralysed political development in the north of Ireland. There has been some complaint today that the forum report is too harsh on previous British attempts to solve the Irish problem. That may or may not be so, but it is true that all previous attempts have failed. That is the harsh reality. Consequently, the British Government, no less than the rest of us, must start making some reassessment.

The position of successive British Governments has not changed since 1920, because they have only one position and that is the guarantee to Ulster Unionism that there will be no change in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland without the majority's consent. There is no other policy. The policies on power sharing and security have not been implemented because of the veto, thus making a bad situation worse.

Because that guarantee was given to a population that was created on the basis of a sectarian head count—that is how Northern Ireland was created—solidified sectarianism in Northern Ireland has encouraged the majority who want to protect their rights to maintain sectarian solidarity. Consequently, sectarianism has remained the motive force of politics in the north of Ireland, and every election proves that. Until that is changed, there will be no movement.

Dr. Mawhinney: I have been following the hon. Gentleman's speech closely. He began with a story about petrol bombers outside his house, and said that he did not call the police as it would have made things worse. He has just said that the implementation of the security policy made things worse. Earlier, he spoke about the wall dividing Protestants and Catholics. He has given the impression that some other security policy would be better and more effective. Perhaps he could help us to understand his point by explaining that security policy.

Mr. Hume: I have already done so, and if the hon. Gentleman reads my speech he may understand that policy. However, in brief, I said that any security policy or system of order must be based on political consensus.

The absence of that political consensus in the north of Ireland is the Achilles' heel that has been exploited by every terrorist. Those who live there know that. There will be wholehearted community backing for the forces of law and order only if that community gives its loyalty to the institutions of the state. One must create the political situation to allow that.

Today, the Secretary of State said that the three options in the forum Report were not on, because they did not have the consent of the Unionist population. What is the British Government's view? Let us hear what they think of those proposals. Let us not hide behind the Unionists. I am sick and tired of people representing Irish unity as something that should not even be talked about. In 1984, we are talking about 5 million people within a Europe made up of countries that have twice this century slaughtered one another by the million, with a savagery far worse than anything that I have ever seen. Yet that Europe held its second direct elections to the European Parliament some 40 years after the end of the second world war. It has been able to build institutions that allow those countries to grow together at their own pace. Is there something wrong with that being an objective for Ireland? Is there something wrong with the people of Ireland finding a way of building institutions that allow them to grow together at their own speed, in peace, harmony and unity—and a unity that accepts the essential diversity?

That brings me to the New Ireland Forum itself, about which much has been written and said. A major consensus within Ireland, within a democratic Nationalist Ireland, should be heeded. Any rejection of it should be carefully considered, because of the massive advantage given to other people.

We are not talking about an extremist document. The document says clearly and honestly that the narrow ground on which we have concentrated for a solution up to now—the narrow ground of Northern Ireland—does not deal with the whole problem. Relationships between the communities in Northern Ireland are only part of the problem. The relationships within Ireland and between Ireland and Britain are the problem. Northern Ireland illustrates the failure to solve that problem. No attention was paid to that problem by the House from 1920 to 1969.

Only within a British-Irish framework can the solution be found. The most important aspect of the report is not the three options, but the views of Irish Nationalists about the ways in which realities must be faced if there is to be a solution. We also say that we are willing to examine other ways of accommodating those realities and requirements. If we are praised by the Government for being willing to look at all options, it ill behoves the Government to start dealing out options themselves.

I invite the House to read chapter 5 of the report carefully. It contains a list of realities which must be faced if we are to solve the problem. Hon. Members should say with which realities they disagree. If they agree with the realities, surely they must agree that the only major proposal in the forum report is to get the Governments together to create the framework and atmosphere in which the realities can be discussed to bring about an end to the Irish problem.

All options and all points of view must be considered. Nothing should be ruled out and nothing should be ruled in. There should be no preconditions to allow people to stay away. That should be the beginning of the real dialogue if we are to find solutions to our problems.

I end where I began, in my own city. This House of Commons was elected on 9 June last year. Those with an interest in such matters know that on 9 June is the feast of Columba, the founder of Derry. In his early days, he was regarded as a rather turbulent priest who caused conflict between the clans in the north-east of Ireland. He thought that stubbornness and pride were the causes of conflict. He went into exile in Iona, where he became a substantial influence in determining the culture and civilisation of most of Scotland. When he was there, he crowned a Scottish chieftain on the stone of destiny, which subsequently became the stone of Scone, which now lies in Westminster Abbey. It was taken back to Ireland once because of the trouble between the clans. He called a convention because he believed that negotiation and discussion without preconditions were the better way to solve the problems than going to war. There was a difference of opinion between the Dalriada, a clan from the area represented by the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley)—the people of the Antrim coast and the people of south-east Scotland—and the people of the clans in the area covered by my constituency. The problem was to whom should the Dalriada pay tribute—the Irish high king or the king of Argyll. The solution was simple. Columba said, "Let them pay tribute to both." In that way he solved the complex identity problem and preserved the unity of the Irish clans. Since then, he has been known in Irish history as a dove of peace. There should be a dove of peace in Government today.

6.25 pm

Dr. Brian Mawhinney (Peterborough): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume), who has made a considerable contribution to our debate. Some months ago, members of the All Ireland Forum came to the Houe to talk to Back Benchers of various parties. Some of us said that the report would be judged on the extent to which it was realistic. I welcomed the dialogue over many months, but I have to say in honesty that I regret the report. The debate examined the problems in the Republic with a new determination which had not existed previously. It was reflected in the forum report in terms of the difference of attitude that it portrayed in relation to the northern Unionists.

The report also portrayed a new attitude towards the United Kingdom Government. It is interesting that one of the three options mentioned—that of a joint authority—flies in the face of the traditional cries from the Republic. Those cries have always been, "Brits out". By definition, the term "joint authority" involves "Brits in". That change of attitude in the Republic is welcome, but it has not been as much commented upon as it should have been. I understand the problems encountered when it became necessary to write the report. The report had to span a considerable expanse of Irish thought.

I declare an interest. I was invited to go to Dublin by the Irish Government, at their expense, for 24 hours to meet the leaders of the various political parties after the forum report had been produced. I was invited to talk to them and to try to ascertain for myself some of the thinking behind the report. This evening I reflect not only my views, but my assessments based upon those discussions. I thank the Irish Government, Mr. Spring, Mr. Lenihan and Mr. Barry for their courtesy at the meetings.

I came back with the impression that a new realisation of what was possible in the island of Ireland had developed. Of

[Dr. Brian Mawhinney]

course, the aspiration was still for a united Ireland. That is made clear in the report. Yet I detected an undercurrent of realisation that such an option was simply not viable. To the extent that the Irish Government have changed their opinion, it is because they have understood in a real and new way what has been said here this evening—that 1 million Protestants cannot be coerced into a united Ireland. The hon. Member for Foyle pointed to the problems of alienation in the Province, which is crucial to the current debate. However, he must realise that, whether he likes it or not, there is another 1 million people who will not be forced into alliances of which they disapprove.

The second thing that changed thinking in Dublin was, strangely enough, the Falklands war. From that an understanding arose that, if the Prime Minister felt so strongly about the concept of British citizenship that she would mount such an operation, there was no way in which the British Government would simply hand over people in a negotiated settlement with the Dublin Government.

The third aspect making an impression is, as the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneux) said, the Government's initial reaction in reminding everyone that Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom and will remain so while the majority want that. What has not been mentioned, but should be, is that that statement came from a Minister who is a member not merely of the Conservative party, but of the Conservative and Unionist party. That might help the hon. Member for Foyle in his quest for a British Government view of the current position.

One of the things that impressed me most during my visit to Dublin and my discussions there was something that Dr. FitzGerald wrote in the *Belfast Telegraph* last Friday. He said:

"The fact is that the horrors of violence in Northern Ireland cast a dark shadow over this entire island."

The hon. Member for Foyle is right in saying that there is alienation in the Province. There must be a certain sense of *deja vu* every time this House meets to discuss the problems of Northern Ireland. We spend our time arguing about the reality of the constitution and the border. Perhaps a window of opportunity has come for us to stop discussing the constitution and to accept it as it is, and that, in the foreseeable future, it will not change. If we could persuade Unionists and nationalists simply to stop debating the constitution and to accept it as it is, that would open all sorts of possibilities and a framework for future discussion.

I immediately accept that such a proposition would commend itself to the hon. Member for Foyle. Yet he has shown a commendable desire this evening to open discussion about Northern Ireland on a Dublin-London axis and to start addressing the problem of alienation. That alienation is incontrovertible. Whether it be 90,000 or 150,000 people—which is roughly the range of those who voted for Sinn Féin in elections during the past 20 or 30 years—it is a substantial core. That core is not simply motivated by a different political aspiration. The hon. Member for Foyle has a different political aspiration, but he does not behave in the way that characterises the leaders of Sinn Féin. This House must understand that those people are disaffected with the state. It must also understand that, whether we like it or not, they provide a cover for violence, which not only kills constituents of

right hon. and hon. Members who represent Northern Ireland—and the remainder of the United Kingdom through the persons in the security forces—but kills jobs and investment.

There is no doubt that the threat of violence spilling into the Republic is having a profound influence on the views of the Irish Government. In fact, the hon. Member for Foyle—a member of the forum—made it clear that that was part of the urgency of the problem that brought the forum into being. Dr. FitzGerald also wrote in that same article last Friday:

"If we do not find and support a solution we too could be overwhelmed by the problem."

The time has come for people to react to the world as it is and for sterile debate about constitutional issues to be set to one side so that we can devote our energy to trying to find ways to come to terms with that alienation before it swamps not only the North but the South and makes its way across to the mainland. I welcome the new sense of realism in the Irish Government, as represented by Dr. FitzGerald's remarks in the newspaper. It takes a big man to set aside his ultimate aspirations and to realise that they are not achievable and that the pressure being brought to bear makes it imperative that something lesser should be negotiated and accepted.

My right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench have an important role to play in trying to persuade the Irish Government that the alienation in the North cannot effectively be tackled while they are holding out some political hope that a united Ireland is a possibility in the foreseeable future. If the consequence of the forum discussion, and the knock-on effect that it has had in the Province and in Britain, is to lay to rest once and for all debate about the constitution in the immediate and foreseeable future so that we can address ourselves to the real issues and to finding mechanisms in Northern Ireland that will command some support from the minority community and help slowly to dissipate the alienation, the House will feel that it is a prize well worth seeking.

I agree with the hon. Member for Foyle that there is no doubt that, over the years, this House and successive British Governments have robbed the minority community of some sense of their identity. They maintain that position despite what seems to be common sense facts to the contrary.

I wonder whether the House noted an interesting parliamentary reply in another place a few months ago, when a Minister was asked on how many occasions discussions under the Flags and Emblems (Display) Act Northern Ireland 1954 had taken place during the past 14 years. Someone like me, brought up in the Province, would know that that Act is important: it makes it illegal for the tricolour to fly in Northern Ireland—

Mr. Hume: Not the French tricolour.

Dr. Mawhinney: That is right. The Act has had a chequered history during the past 14 years of—I had intended to say of reducing violence, but we cannot blame a flag for that—being a scene around which violence has erupted from time to time. It is dear to the hearts of all Protestants.

It was clear from the answer that, although flags had been flown, there had not been one prosecution in 14 years.

I have not researched the subject sufficiently to make a recommendation to the Government. My point is that

there seem to be many ways in which, symbolically and in matters of substance, we can move towards reaffirming the identities of both the Protestants and Catholics, the Unionists and the nationalists, in the North.

I appreciate what has been said on both sides of the House about the rejection of violence and the need for constitutional politics. If constitutional politics are to be constitutional, they must recognise not only the Head of State but the legitimacy of the forces of law and order. I hope that in seeking to differentiate between the non-violent and constitutional brand of politics—and that other form which is anathema to hon. Members in all parts of the House—the minority parties will find a way to protect themselves from any charge that they are ambivalent about what is understood in normal circumstances by the word "constitutional".

This is not an issue which can be set aside as not being of urgency because, as well as killing people, terrorism is also killing jobs, and that must concern all sensible people in the Province, regardless of their political aspirations and beliefs. If the Province is to have a future, it must have an employment base, and that adds urgency to the discussions.

I hope that in the weeks and months ahead people will look again at ways of achieving discussion in Northern Ireland. I believe that those discussions should primarily be between the parties in Northern Ireland and that the parties should, for the most part, be left to themselves. In other words, the British Government should let them get on with the talks and not seek to be apprised of every detail as the discussions proceed. I hope that, for their part, they will appreciate the need for an Irish-British dimension. The Secretary of State keeps telling us that this is a matter for the Parliaments. Although that may be so, the Parliaments require leads from Governments, and we on this side will want a clear direction on the structures which might usefully be set up. I believe that initially they should be between this House and the Dail, excluding members of the Assembly. That would be a sensible way forward.

I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for his speech today. It was one of conciliation, realism and hope. The people of Northern Ireland, of both traditions, owe him a great deal.

6.44 pm

Mr. Stephen Ross (Isle of Wight): Like the hon. Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney), I have had the advantage of visiting Dublin since the New Ireland Forum report was published and of having discussions, in collaboration with my leader, with the Taoiseach, with the Tanaiste and with leading members of Fianna Fáil. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that there is an air of realism among all parties, including Fianna Fáil, represented in the Dail.

I should at the outset declare my interest because I come from Irish-Scottish stock via Liverpool. I am a Protestant, but I have three Irish grandchildren being brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. I want them, when they grow up, to feel equally at home, and to be able to live in peace, both in Britain and in Ireland.

I should mention, in view of the Liverpool connotation to which I referred—the hon. Member for Peterborough dealt with the point in passing—the rise of Sinn Féin and the fear of the violence spreading into the South. Concern is being expressed about the local elections next year. We cannot brush matters off and say that those are

simply developments in Ireland, for if the violence starts to increase, as it appears it might, in the South, it would reach these shores and would occur in Liverpool, Glasgow and even in Southampton.

I had the honour of representing the Isle of Wight when Lord Mountbatten was our governor, and I had the opportunity to speak with him on a number of occasions. We have heard military stories and stories about the bravery of the people of Ireland, from both the North and South. I recall Lord Mountbatten telling me of an occasion when he chaired a Burma Star reunion in Dublin. After a convivial evening, as one might imagine, a number of Irish men from south of the border came to him and said, "When you get back to the big house, Lord Mountbatten, tell your lady that if she is ever in trouble again, we will be over." It is tragic to think that he was killed, blown up, off the west coast of Ireland. I am sure, however, that he would not have held that against the Irish people, for he held them in high esteem.

If he were in his place, I would congratulate the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) on the size of his vote in the recent European Parliament elections. However, I believe that that vote had more in common with a sort of Scargill position as leader of the NUM than as in the case of the hon. Gentleman, with any response to the forum. I believe that the electorate like the idea of having somebody who they know will shout his mouth off and defend them on occasions, and that is why the hon. Member for Antrim, North got such a vote. It had nothing to do with his views on the New Ireland Forum report.

I now do what I have wanted to do for some time, and that is to pass a verbal bouquet to the Secretary of State. He has done a marvellous job in the Province in the last three years and I regret it if his term in office there is coming to an end. I also pay tribute to his wife, whose work in the Province is much appreciated.

We should say to the people in the South of Ireland, to our American friends and to people throughout the Western world that Britain has tried desperately hard for the last 15 years, under successive Secretaries of State and Governments, to bring peace to the North of Ireland and to put right matters that were wrong for far too long.

There is cause for optimism on the industrial front. Last week I was in Washington and saw regular landings of Shorts 330s and 360s. They are selling in substantial numbers to American airlines. I am also proud of the fact that the middle wings of those planes are made in the Isle of Wight. When I visited Harland and Wolff recently, I found a new optimism there, under Mr. Parker, and some of that comes from the Secretary of State's initiative; when it was in real trouble, he secured an order for that yard from one of the largest oil companies.

The De Lorean affair was an absolute tragedy. Whatever criticism may be levelled at the way in which it was structured, at the time it brought work to a part of Belfast that was desperately in need of it. I was there when it was at its prime and I am pleased to learn that Shorts, if it continues to do well, will take part of that lovely factory. We should also praise the success of LEDU—the local enterprise development unit—which has done a great job. Indeed, I wish that it were possible for the sort of grants and loans that it can make to be made in my constituency.

I also praise the Housing Executive, and not just for its work in Belfast. I was in Londonderry recently and discovered that the investment in housing in Derry is

[Mr. Stephen Ross]

terrific. The investment has gone not only into housing but into central redevelopment and a new £23 million bridge over the Foyle, although I am not sure as to where the traffic is going. We have put a huge investment into Londonderry, though it is tragic, with such high unemployment, to see the empty factories. But we have tried, and I doubt whether anything like that amount of investment would have come from the Dublin Government. The cost to the British taxpayer has been about £1,400 a head, which is a huge burden. Some of the annexes to the forum report tell us that the cost of violence for Great Britain since 1969 has been slightly less than £9 billion while the cost to the Irish Treasury has been about £2 billion. We must remember these sums and realise that they are a burden upon us. We are prepared to pay but we should remind our fellow citizens exactly what the cost is. There are many other costs to be considered, the principal one being the appalling loss of life and of permanent injury. It is tragic that over the past 40 years Northern Ireland and the Republic have tended to drift further apart. The punt no longer matches the pound.

The Opposition spokesman, the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer), talked about agricultural support. I remember talking to a soldier in Ireland and being told about the dislike of the military in south Armagh. I suggested that south Armagh should be merged into the Republic and he replied that there would be no point in doing that because the price of milk in the North was higher than it was in the South. That situation has probably changed recently and perhaps the farmers in the North are now looking with some envy at those in the South.

It was a grave mistake on the part of the Southern Ireland Government to write the banning of abortion into their constitution and we are all aware that the Republic has a growing tradition of neutrality. These features make it much more difficult for the two parts of the island to come together.

I have been reading Bruce Arnold's "What Kind of a Country?", which is a history of the past 15 years in Ireland. I have read also the fine speech which Lord Fitt made in another place on 20 June. I noticed that Lord Fitt was in the Peers' Gallery and I am sorry that he has left. Both Bruce Arnold and Lord Fitt brought home to me the tragedy of the demise of the Sunningdale agreement. It was a great achievement when the Government of the day set up the Sunningdale talks and we should give them credit for taking that initiative. It was a tragedy when Sunningdale was brought down. However, we must try again and respond positively to the forum report, which we must remember is a Dublin initiative. Similarly, we must respond positively to the Haagerupp report, which has not been mentioned so far. Finally, there is the Official Unionist document, which I find constructive. It goes quite a long way with the forum report on some issues, for some of its proposals fit in with the observations that are set out in the report. That is only to be welcomed.

We must pay regard also to the pertinent remarks of a brave and honest man, the Bishop of Down and Connor. Public opinion polls show consistently that there is strong support for a substantial measure of power sharing within the Province. We should surely be able to make some progress on the political front.

In a speech which I addressed to the Liberal assembly in September 1983 I said that we should concentrate our efforts on encouraging the deliberations of the forum, which was then still considering its report, and on "establishing and maintaining good Irish/British relations, establishing parliamentary links with the Dail, overcoming terrorism and concentrating on the restructure of the economy of the Province, on the introduction of PR for parliamentary elections and support for continuing European interest in the affairs of the Province."

I am sure that we should respond to the realities that are contained in chapter 5 of the forum report. I agree with the hon. Member for Foyle that most hon. Members will find it difficult to criticise the 10 and 11 points that are contained within it. I accept that there will be criticisms of the proposed solutions much as I should like to see a federal or joint authority type of structure. I know that in present circumstances that is not possible.

We should be able to respond to the forum report with some positive initiatives. The Official Unionists and the alliance parties call for a Bill of Rights. A proposal that is dear to the hearts of Liberals and our SDP colleagues. My colleague in another place, Lord Wade, has tried twice to put such a Bill through another place. He debated the issue in Belfast not so long ago. We can build on the Unionists' suggestion of devolving more power to the Assembly but I should like further clarification of the role that they have in mind for the minority parties and their power of veto where necessary, a power which I am sure the SDLP will be requiring. I still believe that we could make progress with the concept of all-Ireland courts, a subject which was discussed at Sunningdale.

Last summer there was a great deal of opposition in this House to the initiatives of the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, which led to what has now become known as the Haagerupp report. When the committee's initiatives were debated and voted on in March, the findings and recommendations contained within them were much praised. Conservative Members praised them but they were not allowed to vote for them. There was only one Conservative Member who had the guts to do so.

I shall read paragraphs 13 and 14 of the motion, which received overwhelming approval, and having done so I shall address the remainder of my speech to the matters that are contained in paragraph 14.

Paragraph 13

"calls upon the British Government and the Irish Government to re-examine their individual and collective responsibility for expanding and enlarging their mutual co-operation not only in matters relating to security north and south of the border but also to use their influence with the two communities in Northern Ireland to bring about a political system with an equitable sharing of Government responsibilities which will accommodate the identities of the two traditions and so uphold the ideals and the concept of tolerance vis-a-vis minorities in the two countries and in other European country member states."

Paragraph 14

"urges the Parliaments of the two countries to set up as suggested by the meeting of British and Irish Prime Ministers in 1981, a joint Anglo-Irish parliamentary body with representatives of the two Parliaments and of any elected body truly representative of Northern Ireland, and to have Members of the European Parliament take part in such a body insofar as that meets with the support of British and Irish Members."

My Liberal and SDP colleagues and I have been studying the examples of the Nordic council. We believe that it set out a structure that could help us in the establishment of a parliamentary tier that will link Westminster, Dublin and Belfast.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell: Why Belfast?

Mr. Ross: There are arguments about that, but I think that there is a case for including Belfast. We do not believe that stability can be achieved purely by means of an internal settlement in Northern Ireland. The geographical proximity of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic would of itself be sufficient to create an Irish dimension to the politics of Northern Ireland. In addition, a significant minority of the population in Northern Ireland looks to the Republic for the fulfilment of its national aspirations, and that is bound to have an effect on the politics of the Province. Attempts to express this relationship in institutional form have, unfortunately, not been successful.

The Government of Ireland Act 1920 established two subordinate Parliaments in Ireland and proposed that a Council of Ireland should be established. That proposal proved abortive as the Unionists were unwilling to recognise it. The Sunningdale agreement of 1973 established the power-sharing Executive in Northern Ireland. It proposed also that there should be a Council of Ireland, but that, too, proved abortive. In the view of many, the proposed Council of Ireland fuelled Unionist hostility to the Executive. That hostility culminated in the strike of May 1974, which led to the Executive's collapse.

It is clear that a new approach must be adopted which recognises the Irish dimension while at the same time assuaging Unionist fears that a recognition of this dimension will be a step to Irish unity by the back door. We believe that any initiative should take the form of one linking the two sovereign states of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic rather than one linking Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

The improvement of relations between the two countries is an essential precondition to the resolution of the Northern Ireland problem. We seek to bring together both the Unionists and the nationalist populations in Northern Ireland as well as the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. We believe that the two processes are interlinked; neither will be successful without the other. We want to enable the two traditions in Ireland, the Unionist and the nationalist, to appreciate each other's viewpoint without fearing that in so doing each will be compromising its own deeply held beliefs.

There is already an Anglo-Irish council, which meets at regular intervals and links Ministers and officials of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. What is lacking is a forum in which parliamentarians from the two countries can meet to discuss common problems and methods of improving relations. We propose that a British-Irish parliamentary council be established. The council would be established by an agreement or treaty between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. The agreement or treaty should reiterate the declaration that Northern Ireland would in no circumstances cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the majority of its population. This would serve to calm Unionists and to isolate the men of violence.

It should also be stated that the aim of the council should be an improvement in relations between the two countries and not political union. We suggest that it should comprise parliamentarians from the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, and the Irish Republic. We suggest a total of 29 members: 12 from Great Britain, five

from Northern Ireland and 12 from the Irish Republic. There would, therefore, be a United Kingdom majority in the council.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell: The hon. Member has made an important point. Would the five members from Northern Ireland be Members of this House from Northern Ireland?

Mr. Ross: That was not the intention. They would be from the Assembly, but that matter is not fixed. We are putting forward some ideas, and I believe that this is the time to put them forward.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): What about the 12 members from this House? Would they be Northern Ireland Members?

Mr. Ross: There is no reason why there should not be some members from Northern Ireland among 12 representing this House. I have nothing against that. It is up to the House to devise the measures by which the members are appointed.

There would be a United Kingdom majority on the council but also for the island of Ireland. The parliamentary council would possess consultative powers only. It would be an organ of consultation between the Parliaments of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. Its functions would be twofold. First, it would be able to examine legislative proposals on matters of common interest. In the agreement or treaty establishing the council the two Governments would agree that before any substantial legislative proposals affecting relations between the two countries were promulgated there would be a Green Paper,—a consultative pre-legislative stage—so that the council could make known its views in good time so that it could influence Bills placed before the two Parliaments.

The council would have the power of the Select Committees of the House of Commons to send for persons and papers. The council's role in that area would be particularly important in matters affecting the rights of minorities. The council would have been able, for example, to consider security legislation in Northern Ireland and the recent referendum on abortion in the Republic.

Secondly, the council would be able to conduct investigations of its own, unrelated to current legislative proposals, and issue reports on matters which, in its view, affected relations between the two countries. It would have a progress-chasing function, acting as a pressure group dedicated to the improvement of British-Irish relations. It could also make proposals for future legislation bringing the two countries closer. It might consider, for example, the role of denominational teaching in Northern Ireland and the Republic, wasteful duplication of expenditure on youth training, and the development of school curriculums more harmoniously attuned to the aspirations of the two communities in Northern Ireland.

Following the EEC's lead, the council could consider the harmonisation of educational qualifications, standards of consumer protection and, more broadly, the subject of how Government expenditure could be more effectively deployed.

We believe that a British-Irish parliamentary council could play a major role in improving relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic. It would be a great mistake to belittle such an institution as a talking shop,

[Mr. Ross]

because it has only consultative powers. As the experience of Westminster Select Committees has shown, the influence that such bodies can exert depends less upon their powers than upon the will to agree on the part of members and the cogency of their recommendations.

The council might conceivably develop into a forum in which solutions of the Northern Ireland problem can be discussed and developed. That would, of course, depend upon the quality of the relationships established between parliamentarians of opposing views. Whether or not the council developed in that way, an resulting improvement in British-Irish relations would, of itself, benefit Northern Ireland. We see the council as contributing to the settlement of the Northern Ireland problem not overnight—such a rapid solution is hardly possible—but over a longer perspective. Above all, the council could help to destroy the false images that the parties to the Northern Ireland conflict have of each other. They are false images which have done much to bedevil relations between the Irish and the British people over the past 100 years.

The one thing that emerged from the talks with the members of the Dail was that they had not appreciated the views and problems of the people of the North. They are a new generation and they have been fed on stories of the past. They learnt a great deal from going through the forum exercise. If the council were to destroy those false images it would significantly lessen the mutual fear that lies at the root of the conflict, and would, I hope, reduce the political appeal of Sinn Fein whose strength in recent years must be a cause of anxiety to all north and south of the border, and well understood by the chief executive of the Official Unionists who called it the ultimate nightmare. I cannot put it better.

7.3 pm

Mr. Fred Silvester (Manchester, Wittington): I intervene with some diffidence because I take the point made by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) that it would be so much better if it were possible for the people of Northern Ireland, of all the parties, to solve the problem themselves. Eventually it must be upon their wishes and consent that anything worth living with will remain, but I doubt whether that is possible. Although I wish well such talks as the right hon. Gentleman so eloquently foreshadowed this afternoon, I retain some doubts as to whether we can deal with the matter within the context of Northern Ireland alone.

One point that I believe should be made as we discuss the future is that my right hon. Friend's creation of the Assembly is a matter upon which we shall look back with great content. Those who expected to find that it was a radical solution, in place by now, never understood what it was about in the first place.

What my right hon. Friend saw, and what the Assembly has provided, is that Northern Ireland needs a forum for itself—a centre for political activity. It is a vessel into which one can pour many concoctions. I believe that it will stay. I see no Government wishing to remove it. One of the difficulties is that, whenever we reach a constitutional problem of this magnitude, it is necessary to go through the hassle and battle of getting a statute through this place. Now that we have the Assembly in place, many different

permutations can be played. I believe that it will remain as a permanent and valuable part of the Northern Ireland scene.

I come now to the subject of what concoction we should pour into that vessel, and I suggest tentatively that we might consider that on three basic premises. First, we should begin by understanding once again that we are probably dealing with the most powerful political force that exists in the world—the force of the nation. Secondly, I wish we would adopt less of the cloud-cuckoo-land approach—wishful thinking—and attach a more importance to the realities of political power and a little less to comfortable evasions. Thirdly—this may sound somewhat different from what my right hon. Friend said—I suggest that it might be better to do nothing if we cannot do enough.

I know that it is unfashionable now to say this, but I think that we should do well to acknowledge that nationhood remains the most powerful political force in the world today. As one who finds the sense of belonging to a nation of the utmost importance, it comes as no surprise to me that other people should do the same. I am aware that many of our most enlightened politicians wish otherwise, but throughout the world we see that, whatever colour people may have in politics or religion, the power of the nation remains strong. We will not merge, substitute or destroy it during our political lifetime.

We should remember that at the heart of the problem—although we might talk about traditions or identities—we are really talking about nations. We have a classic case where nations and boundaries do not coincide. The reality is that this happens more often than we would wish. As a result, it is necessary to arrive at compromises.

One of the interesting points about the documents before us is that they all clearly state our recognition of the nations. Paragraph 4.9.1 of the New Ireland Forum report states:

"Unionists generally regard themselves as being British, the inheritors of the specific, communal loyalty to the British Crown."

In the Assembly debate, on 8 May, Mr. Ferguson said:

"There is not one nation of the Irish, there are two nations."

The DUP document, "The Unionist Case", says:

"The longstanding, cultural development between the two peoples in Ireland has evidenced itself in ways which affect not only their attitudes but their daily lives."

Therefore, we are confronted with the realisation that this is a classic case of two nations in one place, and I see no evidence whatever to suggest that that problem will go away.

It is misleading and evasive to speak of unity by consent, when we all know that such consent is not and will not be forthcoming. The DUP, in its document, says:

"Even if expelled from the United Kingdom, . . . Northern Ireland would not countenance, either in the short term or in the long term, unity with the Republic."

My second premise is that we should be careful of evasion. There are times when evasion and being willing not to confront issues is helpful. It helps those who have difficult decisions to make, and it can ease the pain. Sometimes it buys time when time is the only remedy. But there are times when it is not so wise, and I think that this may be one of those occasions.

I sympathise with the efforts of all those who distinguish between the content of the documents and their tone. Everyone is leaning over backwards to find common factors in the forum report, in "The Way Forward" and in

the other documents. There are improvements in tone. There are statements of the other side's point of view, which are set out more clearly than previously, but there are also many substantial differences and lack of movement in the basic positions of both sides.

The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) talked about a conference with an absolutely open agenda and suggested that talk would solve all. There has been much talk and there have been many conferences.

There are certain basic elements in the situation to which perhaps I come late, because I started by believing that our best course was some kind of administrative devolution, but I think that we have to look deeper than that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) talked about alienation and seemed to imply that the problems could be solved without tackling the constitution. I do not believe that is possible. There are realities that we have to face.

My final premise is that maybe—I am not so sure of this—we should do nothing unless we can do enough. The prize, after all, is peace. Everything else turns on that—the economy, the quality of life, the wear and tear on the Army and on the respect for law, and the general poisoning of the political atmosphere both here and in the Republic. All the problems spring from, or are made worse by, the terror, and, above all, by the growing respectability of terror. We shall not end the nightmare by ritual condemnation or good will gestures, however well intentioned, which fall short of tackling the core problem.

The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) said that political developments themselves cannot bring peace. That is right, but it does not follow that peace can come without political developments.

In essence, we face now, as we have faced every year, the twin pillars of terror. One is the pillar of evil—that combination of crime, political ambition, sadism, fear and greed, which motivates much of the violence. The other is the pillar of disillusion—that long-felt belief that, although their methods are evil, the objectives of the IRA are right and that nobody else seems to be getting anywhere.

For the terror to fail, both pillars have to crack. By all means let us be fierce in our assault upon the terrorists, but we need to turn that disillusion into hope. Anything less will fail. Out of the next generation come the terrorists to replace those whom we capture. The people in the United Kingdom as a whole have a right to question whether a policy which relies on so high a level of commitment to security as far as the eye can see is one that can be supported for ever.

Throughout the debates on the Province that we have had in this House, the right hon. Member for Down, South (Mr. Powell) has said that constant change in the constitution is an encouragement to the IRA; that each move is seen as a response to its violence; and each concession an invitation to try again for a bit more. The right hon. Gentleman's solution is to enmesh Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom so that the nationalists give up hope. I agree that we need that stability and air of finality. Constant innovation is disruptive. Although I cannot agree that a policy to tighten the union with the United Kingdom would achieve that purpose, I am also seeking a resting place. We want to be in a place where a generation or two can put down roots, and perhaps be

able to look back, at the beginning of the next century, and ask what all the fuss was about. That is why I say that if we cannot do enough, we should stay where we are.

What is enough? It is the point at which the minority community can feel that its national allegiance is properly expressed without denying the same right to the Unionists. We shall not change Sinn Fein, for which a break with Great Britain is the only solution, but we need to find the point at which the potential gain from supporting such a line is less to the majority of the Catholics in Northern Ireland than the loss of life and a future which is disrupted by violence and vice. It is a point—I emphasise this—which needs to be underwritten by the overt commitment of the Irish parties and by the joint participation of the Irish police and armed forces in the restoration of normal law.

Such a commitment represents an abandonment of what an Opposition Member was calling the forced consent. There is no forced consent. What is required is that there should be an underwriting by the Government of the Republic—and, indeed, by the parties of the Republic—of a solution which allows the Unionists to remain part of the United Kingdom. I believe that is possible, but there is a price to be paid. Our institutions need to recognise what is in practice already the truth.

Large numbers of Catholics hold allegiance outside the United Kingdom. The Queen's writ does not run everywhere. Some of the problems facing Northern Ireland will yield only to joint activity with the South. The security problem cannot be solved without the active participation of the Republic. We need to find a way in which we can bring together that joint allegiance. We cannot have peace without joint security and we cannot have joint security without some recognition of the quality of nationhood, with which I began. To concede too little will not bring peace—merely another round of disillusion as yet another concession fails.

It is tempting to grasp at the immediately obtainable titbit, such as the council to which the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) referred. Peace can come only if we can sign up the main political forces throughout the island of Ireland in a combined assault on the terrorist, and therefore a combined effort in regard to economic and political problems.

The structure that allows some measure of joint allegiance does not—nor could it—involve a break of the links between the Province and the United Kingdom. It has been made abundantly clear—and most eloquently by my right hon. Friend today—that no British Government would countenance such a thing; nor indeed, would the British people or the people of the Province.

We should be careful how we talk about sovereignty. Continuously we surrender it, we merge it and we blur it when it suits our interest. What is the point of sovereignty if it cannot be used for the benefit of the people? I suggest that the United Kingdom has made the biggest surrender of its sovereignty in its history to the European Court of Human Rights. It has done that without statute, without debate in this House, and without even much interest among hon. Members. It therefore behoves us, particularly Parliament, not to be querulous about some aspects of sovereignty in return for real benefits of stability and peace. But it is not necessary to go that far. The sovereignty of the United Kingdom over Northern Ireland is not at issue. The achievement of agreement does not require it. The stability that we seek can come in many

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guises, provided that we retain the two essential ingredients—that the loyalties of both nations need to be satisfied, and the resultant modified union of the Province with the United Kingdom must be underwritten by the Governments and the peoples both of the United Kingdom and of the Republic.

7.20 pm

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): When I hear hon. Members from Northern Ireland speaking in the House, I always approach these debates with a certain humility, because we over here understand only temporarily what they live through when we go to visit them. I say that equally of hon. Members who agree or disagree with what I say, on either side.

When I heard the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) make his forthright speech I was rather intrigued to hear him say to the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) that he was surprised that he was not in the Assembly. The hon. Member for Antrim, North said that he would like to be able to talk to him and to convert him. What hope was there if one could not do that sort of thing. One might as well, the hon. Gentleman said, go home. The hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson), has come to the debate. At first I thought that he had expressed his view in triplicate.

I always hope that those of us who have been attending Northern Ireland debates for quite a time do not come with great expectations, because we have learnt not to do so. I remember, throughout the years, that the various Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland, including Labour Secretaries of State, conveyed the view, possibly inadvertently that the security position was improving and that things were clearly on the mend. People like me and my hon. Friends who represent Sheffield—two of them struggle in this area—always cautioned against that. The reality is that we were correct.

None the less, I believe that the debate places a heavy burden on all of us. We have a choice. We can either give some hope to the two traditions in Northern Ireland, and to all the people who are interested over here as well, or we can take up fixed, rigid and entrenched positions and leave those people in despair, fearing that, as the emergency has continued for 15 years, it looks as though many more years will pass before we find a solution.

We seem to have no solutions to offer to this intractable problem. I often think that way, and I believe that all of us do. Unless we hold out some hope, the melancholy cycle of violence, maiming and killing will go on in that small country. It is such a tiny community when it is compared with large countries. On a kind of pro rata basis, Northern Ireland has lost from 80,000 to 90,000 people in terms of the United Kingdom generally.

If we do not move somewhere else, in my opinion we shall move towards the ultimate catastrophe. There seems to be a sense of urgency, without the need to panic, about the situation we face. The forum was born out of that. I slightly disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Foyle. Whatever he says about the voting system in Northern Ireland, many people still voted for Sinn Féin. That is the political reality, whatever the voting system is. Possibly, that was one of the main factors that brought about the forum—the disillusionment of sections of the minority Catholic community with the present situation,

which was borne out in that vote. Sections of that community were alarmed by that vote. The alarm bells were ringing. It was apparent that constitutional nationalism and constitutional unionism were in a certain disarray. We must take all those factors into account.

Whatever we may think about it, I believe that the New Ireland Forum is an honest attempt to prove that there is a peaceful solution by consent. The right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneux) is a politician to whom I always like to listen. He puts his views clearly, although his viewpoint does not always sound as moderate as the language he uses. None the less, I always like to listen to him. He does not look daggers at anything, or any of us, but he says what he honourably believes. I respect that.

I believe that we can either begin to prove that there is hope of a peaceful solution or we can leave people thinking that, no matter how we try, the problem is so intractable that we are a hopeless lot and are not getting much further with it. Unless there is some movement somewhere towards what we have constantly held out—a peaceful solution—there will be more disillusionment among the people of Northern Ireland and other parts of Ireland.

The three alternatives given—the unitary state, the federal/confederal state, and the joint authority state have been more or less moved out of court by hon. Members of the Unionist persuasion, and by the Government as well. Therefore, we must think seriously about the stage that we have reached now.

The Official Unionist document is couched in very moderate language. My hon. Friend the Member for Foyle says that it is the most moderate language that he has read in any Unionist document yet. I shall quote from paragraph five on the first page of the document—it did not mince words, but came to the point straight away:

"If Northern Ireland is to have a devolved government with legislative and executive powers on the Stormont model, with the government being drawn from the party or coalition of parties having a majority, this would almost certainly be 'Unionist' in character."

That is made plain. The document continues:

"Its overwhelming political objective would be the maintenance of the Union. Such an arrangement would logically preclude power sharing with those whose aspiration is a United Ireland. Conclusion 12 of the Report of the Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention states

"That no country ought to be forced to have in its Cabinet any person whose political philosophy and attitudes have revealed his opposition to the very existence of the State".

This underlines the logic of the anti-power sharers in these circumstances and the argument is difficult to refute."

The Official Unionists make no bones about it. They say quite clearly that anybody who believes in an ultimately united Ireland has no place with them. Then, they wonder why the SDLP did not go into the Assembly. The reality is there. It is categoric and definite. It poses a problem with which all of us are trying to grapple.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell: The hon. Gentleman omitted the context from which he was quoting. The context was that of a legislative and administrative devolution to a Northern Ireland Assembly with, therefore, a Cabinet structure. It is necessary to include that context to give the correct meaning to the words that the hon. Gentleman quoted. I am sure that he will agree with that.

Mr. Flannery: The right hon. Gentleman is correct. None the less, I reiterate the fact that it is the fundamental viewpoint of unionism that power sharing at all in Northern Ireland is wrong. There are elements in the

Unionist party that disagree, but there is something important about the vote that the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) received. It is a powerful grouping, and we must look at it as clearly as possible.

I agree with the right hon. Gentleman, but the official Unionists have, in polite language, really asked for a return to the old Stormont. I believe that that is their aim. They will never admit it when they are wrong. They will never admit to the things that the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) said about bigotry and the way that the Catholic minority has been treated. They have always conveyed the impression that there was democracy in Northern Ireland. There never was. The action of the Catholic minority shows that most clearly.

I should like to tell the story of some years ago when I went into the offices of what is now the Democratic Unionist party, which were festooned with Union Jacks—almost like a National Front organisation. I have mentioned this before in the Chamber to the hon. Member for Antrim, North. As we were talking, I happened to see a picture on the wall. It was a photo-montage. I had a look at it, and it showed the hon. Gentleman sitting on a papal throne, and the Pope was kissing his foot.

In the face of such appalling bigotry, where are we going? People try to say that bigotry does not exist. Despite my Irish name, I am not a Catholic. I am trying to grapple as best I can with the terrible problem that confronts us all. Let us be clear that there are reactionary and powerful forces that do not want us to solve the problem. When the hon. Member for Antrim, North was speaking earlier about gunmen I said, "What about the gunmen on the hillside?" The hon. Gentleman made light of that, as he previously made light of the anecdote that I have just told. When I raised it with him later, he said, "It was only a joke." I do not believe it. Certain people think that they have the God-given right to rule over others and they will not let a little thing like democracy get in their way.

I dearly hope, as Dr. FitzGerald does, that there is a chink of light coming from the forum report and certain other documents. I like the ending of his argument. He said that no matter what we feel, we should talk about it. We should get together and argue in as wide a grouping as possible. I believe that the New Ireland Forum is an attempt to do that. Chapter 5.1, paragraph (1) states:

"Existing structures and practices in Northern Ireland have failed to provide either peace, stability or reconciliation."

That is true. There is no hope if those structures remain as they are. The report continues:

"The failure to recognise and accommodate the identity of Northern nationalists has resulted in deep and growing alienation on their part from the system of political authority."

Paragraph (4) states:

"The present formal position of the British Government, namely the guarantee, contained in Section 1 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act, 1973, has in its practical application had the effect of inhibiting the dialogue necessary for political progress."

That point was made by the hon. Member for Foyle. I am not proposing a solution, but to have that fact in the background to help means that one does not necessarily get down to real argument and try to solve the problem because one feels so powerful. All those matters must be considered.

I was particularly pleased when Dr. FitzGerald said that this is not a solution to our problems but only an agenda. In other words, there is nothing final about it. The three

options proposed are not necessarily the final three. It is suggested that they are worthy of discussion by all of us and should not be immediately and rapidly turned out of court.

We should all realise that although there is no royal road to solving this intractable problem, we must make some political progress, not least because our people are deeply frustrated at the lack of progress. We all know that if we consulted our people, we might get an awful shock, as the *Daily Mirror* did when it ran a poll a few years ago, and about 70 per cent. of those asked wanted to come out of Northern Ireland. I, for one, see no royal road, and I would struggle against it. Nevertheless the British people have a sense of frustration. If there was a referendum, it would change things drastically. It would have an effect that I personally would not wish.

Some people, many from my own side, for whom I have profound respect and affection, believe that pulling the troops out will solve the problem. I personally am completely opposed to that, having gone to Northern Ireland many times through the years. I fear a blood bath. Those people might be correct that pulling the troops out would somehow be the catalyst not to tragedy but to political movement, and, ultimately a united Ireland by consent, which the Labour party and I believe in. It might come about by other methods if we are not careful. We must consider that.

If the troops were pulled out and there was a blood bath, it would be a bit too late to admit that one was wrong. Although I have much sympathy with the people who think that way, I have never gone on one of their platforms, and would not do so. I would need convincing in many ways that it was right because I believe that there is no quick method to solve this intractable problem. There is no royal road. It depends on our integrity and honesty, as we lean on one another's convictions about the discussion and debate that must go on. However, all the time forces are urgently grappling, probably in a different way.

The Secretary of State pours sarcasm on those who, every now and again, ask for a new political initiative. However, I say to the Secretary of State that it is the people who struggle all the time for new initiatives who move mankind forward a step. The Secretary of State says, "You are here again asking for new initiatives." I say, "I am here again pointing out that there is practically no movement." That is what worries me. I am worried that the killing will continue and that more people will be in danger. That is why I believe that the forum initiative should be not thrown out but studied to see whether at the end of the tunnel there is the beginning of an argument to carry us forward to something better.

It may sound like a platitude, but that initiative is a contribution to an ongoing debate which must not cease but in which we want some movement. I am sure that we respect one another's views. I have said that I believe that ultimately the only hope is for the island of Ireland to be a united country in its own right. If a powerful, imperialist Ireland had been the order of the day many years ago and had subjugated and taken over a rather weak England and Scotland and ultimately, due to force of circumstance, had carved out Lancashire and attached it to Ireland, we should certainly not be sitting quiet. We should be struggling for a united England, just as the Irish are now struggling for a united Ireland and we should respect them for it.

Those of us who hate violence believe that the debate must continue. A united Ireland may be a long way off,

[Mr. Flannery]

but I believe that the vast majority of the British people believe that it must ultimately come when they see what is now going on. It may be a long way off, but I believe that as the debate continues it is bound to move more and more in the direction of a united Ireland. I believe that the forum initiative is an honourable attempt to grapple with the problem.

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. So far, the shortest speech has been 17 minutes and the average has been well over 20 minutes. Unless hon. Members are more restrained, many will be disappointed.

7.42 pm

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): What a moment to get to my feet, but I shall do my best, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I begin by congratulating the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) on some of his remarks, but especially on being the only Northern Ireland Member to stay to listen to what other Members have to say. It is a pity that the quality of debate is lowered by the fact that people declaim and then depart so that their views cannot be changed by subsequent argument. As you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have requested brevity, and as my hon. Friends the Members for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) and for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Silvester) have made many of the points far more adequately than I could, I shall confine myself to two matters.

When the forum report was first issued, I said that I regarded it as a very helpful diagnosis, that it made many valuable points, that its tone was its most important feature, but that, unfortunately, it had not really gone any distance down the road towards providing for the future. I would say the same about the "The Way Forward", the document produced by the Official Unionist party. Again, the tone is important. I had thought that I hoped in vain for such a change and moderation in the way in which that group had expressed its views in previous years.

Even more important, however, has been the significant series of statements by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland. I believe that that is the most helpful peg on which we and the Government can hang our attempts to make some tentative progress. Because the report had to be signed by all the nationalist parties, one of its most disappointing features was the caveat of Fianna Fail, the largest party, that only a unitary state would ultimately be acceptable. The Prime Minister, Dr. FitzGerald, has not just categorically denied that, but he has faced the fact, which could not be included in the report, that, whatever the aspirations of the Labour party, the nationalist parties or anyone else to achieve a united Ireland by consent, that is simply not going to happen.

In these matters, we are dealing with Governments, not with Oppositions or parties. The head of the Irish Government has very bravely said to his own people and to us that he sees no prospect of consent for a united Ireland in the near future and that the best way forward, in his view, is to work with the situation that we have. That is a most realistic appraisal, and it should put an end for the foreseeable future to the constant remarks of Unionists, extreme and less extreme, that any conversation or improvement in relations between London and Dublin is

no more than the back door to a united Ireland or the Trojan horse out of which a united Ireland will come. It is not going to happen that way, and the Unionists do neither themselves nor the general debate any service by alleging that it will. Given that clear and brave statement by the Irish Prime Minister, I hope that the two Governments can go forward to improve Anglo-Irish relations I believe that this should be done at Government level. Other parliamentarians may have a part to play, but I doubt whether their efforts could create a viable structure and I do not think that another talking shop is really needed.

That brings me conveniently to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The hon. Member for Foyle spoke out rather violently about how he could be seen entering an Assembly, members of which were responsible for the Poleglass dustbin incident. I put it to the hon. Gentleman that the future of Northern Ireland is about more than dustbins. The need for debate between all political parties which have denied the course of violence is greater than ever before. When I urged the hon. Gentleman to go into the Assembly, in a broadcast programme just after the forum report was published, he said, "There is nothing in it for us." He should ask himself not what is in it for him and his party, but what they can do to contribute to the debate in Northern Ireland. They should ask themselves what they can give, rather than what they can get. It is because for so long the political parties in Northern Ireland have been interested only in what is in it for them and those whom they regard as their people that attempts to bring people together have failed. Only by approaching things in a more generous spirit shall we ever get way from that attitude.

Mr. Hume: First, given the political sterility in Northern Ireland since 1974, this is the first major debate to take place in prime time, and the initiative of my party led to the New Ireland Forum report.

Secondly, under the Conservative Government of 1974 we accepted the terms laid down and negotiated with the Unionist parties and the British Government. We accepted power sharing and went into the Assembly. We were then kicked out following the Ulster Workers Council strike. When the Labour Government invited us to the Northern Ireland Convention, we again accepted the terms laid down by this House and were willing to negotiate, but again the Unionists said that in no circumstances were they prepared to share power. In 1979, when the right hon. Member for Spelthorne (Sir H. Atkins) was Secretary of State, we again accepted the terms and negotiations, but again the Unionists refused to share power.

When the present Secretary of State announced his initiative, before the elections even took place both the Unionist parties made it clear that there were no circumstances in which they were prepared to share power, so the whole purpose of the Assembly was null and void before it began. We were not prepared to put the people of Northern Ireland through another charade. Instead, we took a new initiative, which has led to today's debate. I believe that we were acting in the best interests of all the people in Northern Ireland in so doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the House that interventions should be brief.

Mr. Mates: As the hon. Gentleman's intervention was longer than my speech so far, I hope that I may be allowed some injury time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The hon. Member for Foyle has reminded us of the past. I agree with most of what he has said about past failures, although I think that he made a mistake when he said that a Conservative Government allowed the first Assembly to fail.

Mr. Hume: No. A Conservative Government set it up.

Mr. Mates: I am very proud of the Government who did so.

I take the hon. Gentleman's point. It has become harder for the hon. Gentleman to come back and back again to look for a way forward, but he is a very courageous man. It will take courage for him to abandon his own brand of sterility. Abstentionism is sterile politics, and the hon. Gentleman is made of better stuff than that.

The end of the article by Dr. FitzGerald, to which I have referred is addressed as much to the hon. Member for Foyle as to anyone else. Dr. FitzGerald said:

"Let me . . . take this opportunity to appeal to all those North and South who genuinely seek peace and stability above anything else to put aside their heritage of suspicions and doubts on the one hand, and unrealistic expectations on the other, and to recognise that North and South are interdependent partners in the vital search for peace and stability."

If one added the words "within present constitutional arrangements", that would be as good a recipe for progress as any that could be found. I hope that hon. Members on the Unionist Benches as well as the hon. Member for Foyle, whose courage I admire, will take that brave message to heart. It offers hope for the future.

7.52 pm

Miss Joan Maynard (Sheffield, Brightside): I welcome the forum report, but I wish that I could agree with the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) that it is not in any way connected with trying to help constitutional nationalism. I remember that it was said that Sinn Fein would never stand for election because it would never win any votes. Sinn Fein has started to stand, and to win votes, and that has come about because the nationalist population has felt that constitutional methods were not producing any results.

I believe strongly that Britain, as the sovereign power in the North, is directly responsible for the crisis there. As the forum report states,

"The continuing crisis in Northern Ireland has reached critical proportions, involving intense human suffering and misery for many thousands of people."

That is true, not only in relation to Ireland but in relation to the mainland. The violence over there has inevitably overflowed into our own country. I believe that ever since we divided Ireland we have denied freedom to the nationalist minority in the North. One cannot deny freedom to others and retain it for oneself. It was inevitable therefore that the violence there would spread over here. We have created a problem, and we must take the initiative to try to solve it.

The question is a political one. Politicians have failed, and the men of violence on both sides have inevitably moved in to fill the vacuum. Every day we see evidence of the failure of the British settlement of 1920. The settlement was made against the wishes of the majority. We have heard a great deal today about consent, but there was no consent to the original division of Ireland. The

nationalists were turned into a political minority by the way in which we divided Ireland. We acknowledged the failure of the 1920 settlement when we suspended Stormont and replaced it by direct rule, but we would not have suspended Stormont had not the minority population rebelled in 1969 and said, "Enough is enough."

In 1974 the Sunningdale attempt collapsed. For more than 60 years we have not been able to create workable and acceptable political structures. They have still to be established, and it is not possible to establish them within the context of a Northern Ireland state.

The minority population in the North has always been left out of decision making at the political level. For over 50 years it has lived with power and privilege that have been exclusively Unionist. The minority has suffered discrimination in terms of jobs and homes as well as in many other ways. Emigration has been high as a result, and members of the minority population have been, and still are, subject to very high unemployment.

British policy is mere crisis management. We talk constantly of political consensus, but, in practice, we never embark on the politics. We are always discussing the security situation. We resort to crisis management in an effort to contain the violence without dealing with its causes. We have never been able to maintain the Northern Ireland state without repressive legislation in some form or another. There must be something wrong with a state that can be maintained only by repressive legislation, whether in the form of the temporary provisions legislation, the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1973, internment without trial, or the Diplock courts. It is said that we have the Diplock courts because no one would dare to give evidence. Is there not something wrong with a state in which people do not dare to give evidence in the courts?

Mr. Corbyn: Does my hon. Friend agree that the history of political repression and denial of justice in Northern Ireland has to some extent been mirrored in recent years in the rest of the United Kingdom, with the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1983 and the policing measures that we have seen in London and other major cities since the British Army was sent to Northern Ireland in 1979?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We would do well to keep to the subject of the New Ireland Forum.

Miss Maynard: I was talking of the system of law in Northern Ireland. There is no doubt that, because the violence spilled over into this country, the Prevention of Terrorism Act was brought in, and that Act is an infringement of our civil liberties. I also believe that many of the policing methods used in Northern Ireland are now being introduced into the rest of the United Kingdom. The miners' strike is the best example of that.

We are now sinking to the level of using supergrasses to get convictions. The minority population in Northern Ireland no longer has any confidence in the legal system. Many lawyers and barristers in Northern Ireland are also concerned that their credibility is being undermined by the system of law and that the legal system is becoming an adjunct of the military power.

I see no solution in the context of Northern Ireland. There have been many attempts to find a solution within the context of a Northern Ireland state. They have all failed. The problem transcends Northern Ireland as we

[Miss Maynard]

know it. Whenever Unionist paramilitaries have taken action to block off the slightest move towards a change in the present situation, we have backed off.

I am sorry to say that I do not agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) as I do not believe that there will be peace or a solution to the problem until we set a date for Britain's withdrawal from Northern Ireland. I remind the House that we had to leave Egypt and India. One day we shall have to leave Northern Ireland. It is possible to stay in a country only as long as one has the people's consent to do so. I know that the consent of the majority remains with us, but that is only because of the way in which the boundaries were drawn. They were so drawn to build in a majority for the Unionists. That gives them the veto. As long as the veto remains, the Unionists will never discuss the politics. We must discuss the politics if we are ever to achieve a solution. They do not need to discuss the politics because they have a veto. They are in a strong position and we are in a difficult one. They always say that they want to remain part of the United Kingdom. The issue should be voted on in the whole of the United Kingdom. I believe that the result would show that a majority favour Britain leaving Northern Ireland. Our people do not want their sons and fathers being killed over there any more than anyone else would.

As has been demonstrated in the Chamber today, seeking the consent of the Unionists is a waste of time. History shows no example of a group of people who have enjoyed a privilege giving it up voluntarily. The Unionists are extremely privileged and they will not give up that privilege voluntarily.

In reality we are seeking the consent of the minority in Ireland. As the report says at paragraph 3.1:

"The existing political systems in Ireland have evolved from the 1920 constitutional arrangements by Britain which resulted in the arbitrary division of the country. Prior to 1920 and during many centuries of British rule, Ireland was administered as an integral political unit. The establishment of Northern Ireland as a separate political unit was contrary to the desire of the great majority of Irish people for the political unity and sovereignty of Ireland as expressed in the all-Ireland election of 1918."

The report presents an entirely different ball game as it talks of the real majority in Ireland, not the gerrymandered majority in the North.

I should like to ask some questions of the Minister and my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). How will the Unionists ever be brought to consent to constitutional change while the status quo is backed by the British guarantee? Do the Government and my hon. Friend agree with notion of consent? I believe that they do. Do they agree with the notion of consent within an all-Ireland context? What steps are they prepared to take to win that consent? I do not believe that we shall ever have peace until we find a means of bringing about a united Ireland, as I believe that the Irish people have the same right to self-determination as do we.

8.2 pm

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): One would think, having listened to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Miss Maynard), that there were not well over 1 million British people in Northern Ireland who are proud to be British and wish to remain British. That constitutes one of the problems for people, such as the hon. Lady,

who overcome it simply by ignoring it, as if the interests of the people of Northern Ireland do not count. They argue against the fundamental rule of democracy by which the majority rule. The minority can have its say, privileges and safeguards in the constitution, but ultimately, under the rule of democracy, the majority should have their way. That is what has quite properly happened in Northern Ireland.

It must be acknowledged that ministerial responsibility for Northern Ireland is great. As we understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State might be giving up the burden of his office in the near future, perhaps as one who has often disagreed with his policies I might say that he is entitled to praise for his immense patience, integrity and courage in the past few years.

Much good will has been expressed by both sides. I begin to think that perhaps there is too much good will and too little plain speaking. Although the New Ireland Forum might have been of some value to those who took part in it and although it might be impressive that Irish politicians got together and could agree on any one thing at any one time, it is my privilege as a Back Bencher to say that I believe that the report is a humbug, a deceit, a snare and a delusion. When they subscribed to it, every one of its authors knew that it would be unacceptable to the people of Northern Ireland. According to the publicity given to their deliberations, they set out to find a formula for peace in Northern Ireland—a matter that is none of their business—and have since received a great deal of adulation for their achievements. They have made no contribution to peace in Northern Ireland. It is time that that was said publicly. The constitutional position within Northern Ireland and of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom is of no concern to any foreign state, including the Republic or Ireland, which wants to be recognised as foreign and independent. It was a mistake for the British Government to give so much attention to a document that was prepared primarily by parties in a foreign country and which was commended by a foreign Government.

What is the report's objective? It is to expand the frontiers of the Irish Republic in order to include a part of the United Kingdom. I am glad to observe that a spirit of greater reality can now be found among my colleagues who appreciate that the cause of a united Ireland has not been advanced one inch by the report. It is far more important for us to concentrate on the inherent difficulties, tensions and frictions that arise in Northern Ireland and to consider how to alleviate them to solve the problem that is the basis of the violence there.

I appreciated the interesting and thoughtful speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Silvester), but these matters cannot be solved by constitutional refinement or by a slight rearrangement of constitutional formulae, which do not matter to people on the ground. Such people are not likely to change their view of their neighbours, the people with whom they have fought, protested and argued, just because of some little constitutional device. That is the approach to politics that is beloved of the Liberal party which attaches far more importance to form and ceremony than to reality.

If we are to solve the problem, it must be solved by the people of Northern Ireland living and working together and working out their own formula. That is why the Government got their priorities wrong when they approached the problem by labelling the debate as being on the New Ireland Forum report and other documents. At

the minimum, they should have said that this was a debate on constitutional proposals for Northern Ireland. If any one document had to be given precedence, pride of place should have been given to that produced by the Official Unionist party, entitled "The Way Forward".

The Official Unionists are admittedly in a position of power in democratic terms in Northern Ireland. They make up the largest party, they represent the majority community, and they are proposing improvements and developments within their own constitutional arrangements that could go some way towards appeasing the legitimate complaints of the minority. The idea of a bill of rights does not commend itself to me in the United Kingdom, but it is significant that the Official Unionists have proclaimed it. Perhaps even more significantly, that party proposed that local government should be reinstated on a democratic and parliamentary basis, in that those functions could be transferred to a Stormont. That valuable suggestion should be taken up, not cast aside as if it were just another proposal from another political party. It is a proposal from the most significant political party in Northern Ireland and it should receive far more attention than it has so far.

Perhaps now is an appropriate time for there to be a change in the office of Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Perhaps now, having received all the valuable suggestions from different quarters, a new Secretary of State can consider his own way forward. He might start, for example, by having a border poll. One is due now, and this would be an appropriate stage at which to have one to confirm the fact, which so many Irish Americans and people in the Republic do not believe, that the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland wish to stay within the United Kingdom.

After another border poll, we could proceed with the one solution that has so far never been tried in Northern Ireland—ultimate and complete integration of the Province with the United Kingdom. If we stopped keeping Northern Ireland at arm's length constitutionally and if, in future, we treated it as it should be treated, like any other part of the United Kingdom, such as Wales or Scotland, we would then have a basis from which we could say to every citizen in Northern Ireland, "You are as well treated and have as many rights and privileges under the law as anyone else; religion has nothing to do with it." That is the case elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and it should be so in Northern Ireland. If we were to adopt an integration policy, we could achieve it, and at the same time achieve the peace in the Province that we all so desperately desire.

8.12 pm

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): That Ireland has had such a bitter experience at the hands of England over the years is almost entirely due to the existence in the past of many who thought like the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook). The Irish problem has been coming before the House for the past 14 years due to the number of hon. Members in the Conservative party who still think like the hon. Member for Orpington. I hope that now he speaks only for himself, because otherwise there can be little, if any, fulfilment of even the tentative proposals that the Secretary of State put before the House when he opened the debate.

At this stage of the debate, it is unnecessary, even if time permitted, for me to address myself to anything other

than the general aspects of the New Ireland Forum report. However, it is still necessary, particularly in view of the speech of the hon. Member for Orpington, to remind the House of what the report is about. First, it seeks to put an end to the feuding and to promote instead common understanding followed by dialogue and perhaps, in the end, a real coming together.

Secondly, the report does not purport to be a plan. It is an agenda and necessarily incomplete. It does not disguise the fact that it is only the voice of nationalist Ireland—the indigenous people, the people with tenure, the natives. These are the people who feel that they belong and that they are living in the land of their forefathers, and who wonder why they have been punished for that fact for so long in one corner of it.

Thirdly, the report shows some understanding of those in Ireland who prefer to be different, perhaps not even Irish, certainly British. It has striven to see how their wishes could be accommodated with the views of the rest of the people in Ireland. Fourthly, running right through the report is the insistence that no one living in Ireland should feel less at home than another, or less protected by law than his or her fellow citizens. It is attempting to put an end to second class citizenship. Therefore, Dublin has demonstrated almost unrivalled tolerance, reasonableness, forbearance and maturity. Those are qualities that we in the House do not merit. Can the Unionists or the British match it?

The report has been received favourably overseas, as it has in the more serious British newspapers. However, as we have seen today, some hon. Members still exhibit those symptoms of paralysis that for too long have characterised debates on Northern Ireland in the House. Fair people see that the report presents all sorts of possibilities. The key question is how to get some movement started. That must be the major objective, not some prescribed goal. The structures and gestures now advanced by the Unionist party, as has been confirmed in this debate, may yet amount to a workable alternative to the present unacceptable status quo. We shall all want to read closely the speech made by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneux).

The response of the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley), like the speech made by the hon. Member for Orpington, ran true to form. Everything that the hon. Member for Antrim, North stands for is anathema to tolerance and to reasoned and constructive dialogue. When he comes to the House, he constantly whines about security, but he rejects every political move to bring the two communities together. He and his party, as we gathered from the intervention made by my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), are trying to distance themselves from Mr. Seawright. Some hon. Members may not know, but that gentleman wishes to burn Catholics. The hon. Member for Antrim, North cannot conceal from the House and from his record that he and those immediately round him in the Democratic Unionist party have created people such as Mr. Seawright and the many others like him in the DUP.

The Official Unionist party and the DUP have tactical differences about how to manoeuvre, but hitherto they have been equally opposed to any structure that would challenge the political ascendancy that their forefathers won by force 60 years ago. Now the challenge for the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley is that if we cannot look

[Mr. A. E. P. Duffy]

to any party in Northern Ireland to respond positively to this report, other than the SDLP, we must look to Westminster exclusively. There is no other fulcrum.

It is incumbent on the British Government in any event to face up at long last to their responsibilities. It is Britain that must carry the historic guilt for creating by conquest and plantation the tradition of violence in Northern Ireland. It is Britain which is ultimately responsible for all the horrors of Northern Ireland. Therefore, there is in particular an onus on Government Back-Bench Members, other than the hon. Member for Orpington. They have a particular responsibility because the Government are well aware that a majority in Britain no longer support the union which, since 1969, has cost more than twice Britain's net payments to the EEC. The British Government must be aware that a majority in Britain wholly repudiates the concept of loyalism in Northern Ireland which defines itself in incitements to break the law and defiance of this Parliament when convenient.

The British Government are equally aware that a majority in Britain wonder why they are not consulted when those same people in Northern Ireland invoke the principle of majority rule. The British Government cannot but be aware that support is mounting in all parties here for the view that Unionist intransigence should not be allowed to block political progress in the Province any longer. The Secretary of State presumably had that in mind when he assured the House this afternoon that in relation to certain initiatives the Government "will not stand idly by". They are supposed to be in charge, as *The Economist* reminded them in a recent survey of Ulster. It went on to say:

"It is time for something different."

We shall be looking to the Government for results. It is certainly time for something different if—and I believe that this is the inarticulate premise from which all speeches in the debate have started, with the possible exception of that of the hon. Member for Antrim, North—this House is to check the growing strength of the IRA. The Member who is exerting most influence on this debate is the Member who has yet to take his seat. Labour Members accepted their duty to maintain the Union so long as there was no general consent to change. They accepted the Unionists' veto on reform, even though it had been secured under duress. Some have even tolerated the alienation of Catholics in the past, and, by their refusal to come to grips with the real political problem, have handed the initiative to the IRA. They would have pleaded in their defence that simplistic solutions cannot work in Northern Ireland and that no amount of constitutional guarantees can overcome the problem of alienation on the part of either community—again, we heard that this afternoon from the Front Bench.

But, thank God, Labour Members now recognise—I hope all of them, certainly the overwhelming majority—that if the Catholic community is not to be completely alienated Labour Members at Westminster cannot go on giving a blank cheque to a system that has brutalised the nationalist, to a state which denies his legitimate aspirations in the land of his fathers, and to an Administration who exclude him from decision making.

Without threatening to act without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland, Labour Members believe that the time has arrived to declare for a united Ireland. In the

long term, a democratic united Ireland would be a healthier component of Western Europe than a divided Ireland. That is almost certainly the opinion of most people in Britain, to say nothing of most people in Ireland. Such an objective, the more it is proclaimed, will not unsettle Ulster Protestants—contrary to what the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) argued a few moments ago—more than they are already unsettled. They have been hearing such assurances for the past 14 years in this House. To talk of a united Ireland will encourage some of them to think constructively and positively about coexistence with their Celtic fellow citizens. It will encourage London and Dublin to build up confidence before they pursue co-operation. Their early tasks will relate to psychiatric problems.

Northern Ireland cannot be governed in peace directly from London any more than it could from Dublin. Real progress can be made only when the two Governments feel freer to work towards the evolution of bilateral and even trilateral institutions which reflect and accept, not ignore or coerce, the double dual allegiances in Northern Ireland.

The Economist recently mentioned some of the possibilities that are now available. I shall not recite them, because I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) will dwell on some of them when he replies.

Years of plastic bullets and plastic policies have not brought peace any nearer, as the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) warned in a powerful speech. He also warned that if the Government will not face that reality the killings will go on. Children bred in violence in the North will continue that violence. A new generation growing up in the South will be less passive than their parents and grandparents. The divisions will deepen rather than pass away.

What we are witnessing in Northern Ireland is a community in a state of gradual disintegration. The recent scandalous case of Constable Robinson and the incredible remarks of Lord Justice Gibson represent the most disquieting developments. They suggest that Northern Ireland, having already experienced the failure of Stormont, the failure of the RUC and the British Army to prevent a breakdown of law and order, is now beginning to experience the failure of the judiciary as well. When the people, of whatever political persuasion, fail to recognise the independence and impartiality of those who are chosen to administer justice, it really is the beginning of the end.

Given the resilience of the IRA, the electoral advance of Sinn Fein—

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East) *rose*—

Mr. Duffy: I am coming to an end. I would have given way earlier, but not now.

Given the current demographic trends and the deterioration of the North's economy and social fabric, I do not see how any right-thinking person in Northern Ireland cannot but be grateful for the opportunities presented by the New Ireland Forum's report. Failure by Westminster to respond positively and constructively to the report will not be forgiven by those who come after us.

8.26 pm

Mr. Peter Lloyd (Fareham): I agree with the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) that responsibility for Northern Ireland lies fairly, squarely and

fully with the House. Like him, I took some encouragement from the forum report. It goes a long way towards recognising that there are two nations in Ireland. It specifically acknowledges the Britishness of the majority in the North, but, significantly, not that it is British. However, it concedes that successful new constitutional arrangements in Northern Ireland, and with Ireland as a whole if the two were to be brought together, must have the consent of the Northern majority.

Although those acknowledgements are welcome—I believe they are made from genuine good will—some of the assumptions and supporting arguments in the report devalue them. First, there is the crucial matter of consent. The future status of Northern Ireland is not to be decided by the unfettered choice of the people of Northern Ireland. The forum is offering them a one way ticket to Dublin. The date of arrival is unspecified, the choice of route is up for discussion and there may be delays on the way. But it is perfectly clear that there is only one direction, and the forum expects movement along it. Moreover, it is the British Government who must get them moving.

The forum drops the bluntest of hints that Britain must withdraw its guarantee that there can be no constitutional change in Northern Ireland without the consent of the majority there. That is a very curious requirement—half naive and half cynical. At the very time the forum is urging a suspicious North to trust Dublin's assurances to the Unionists, it is showing how little value it places on such assurances by urging London to go back on those that it gave.

Secondly, the Britishness of the Northern majority, although recognised, has not been conceded in terms of a genuine British allegiance. It is seen much more as a tradition and a cultural orientation. It is certainly not afforded the same status as Irish nationalism, which, according to the forum, can have its full expression only in a united and sovereign Ireland. The forum acknowledges that that Irish identity has often defined itself negatively in terms of Ireland not being British and being separate from Britain, but it does not admit that the British identity in Ulster defines itself just as strongly in terms of not being subject to Dublin. It is not a question as in the story that the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) told us of to whom the clans should pay their tribute, but of to whom the people should give their very strongly and passionately felt loyalties.

Nevertheless, in places the report speaks as if a reorientation towards Dublin might be encouraged if the Irish constitution were amended in some way to make it more acceptable to Protestant opinion though it really means liberal opinion, as if a Unionist in Belfast might one day say to his wife after a very bad breakfast, "Now that they have, got easier divorce in the South, I am seriously thinking of voting Republican." National loyalties are not manoeuvred, changed and engineered in that way.

The forum also argues from a tendentious historical summary that conceals rather than illumines the problems that the forum was supposed to face. There is never a hint in its criticisms of Stormont that the 1920 Act, setting up the Northern Ireland Parliament, was designed not to divide Ireland—that had clearly already happened—but to create structures that would facilitate its coming together again.

Then again, for all the talk in the forum report of the importance for each tradition of the symbols and administrative expressions of their respective identities,

there is not a word about the impact on Northern Ireland of the Free State's decision, first, to end allegiance to the Crown and, secondly, to withdraw from the Commonwealth. Of course, the Free State had every right to make those changes, if that is what it wanted to do and that was the only way that it could fully express its national identity as it saw it; but in such a document it is wrong, misleading and superficial to ignore the impact that that must have had in drastically reducing—if not totally destroying—the possibility of finding common ground between the new Republic and British Northern Ireland.

Furthermore, the forum report contrasts the considerable, if not total, success—that is the forum's own qualification, not mine—with which the Unionists who were left in the South after 1922 were integrated, with the continuing alienation of the nationalist minority in the North. Yet again, however, it does not acknowledge that the Unionists were a much smaller proportion of the population in the South—then 10 per cent. but now down to 3 per cent.—who had no idea of putting the clock back and who received no encouragement from the United Kingdom to do so. In that situation, they posed no threat whatever to the Free State, and had no influence whatever on its evolution to a Republic. In the North, however, the nationalist minority, which was proportionately three times larger, regarded partition as illegitimate and temporary and was encouraged in its intransigence by the South, which formally incorporated the claim to the Six Counties in its constitution in 1937. The minority started out unwilling to work to make a success of the administrative arrangements in the Province.

I put that forward not as a defence of the Stormont system, but as an explanation as to why Unionists could feel that their future depended on excluding Republicans from places of influence. It generates exasperation, not understanding or good will between the communities, to ignore it, as the forum has done.

That is the problem. Given the reality for the present and foreseeable future of the two national allegiances, and particularly their intermingling in Northern Ireland, there is no arrangement in Ireland alone that can successfully accommodate them both.

If the North were integrated, federated or confederated with Dublin, the Republic would find that it had acquired a large, intractable Unionist minority from the North that it would be able to manage no better than Stormont was able to manage the large intractable nationalist minority that it found itself with after 1922. Thus, for the foreseeable future, the only practical arrangement is to ensure that the sharpness of the constitutional divide in Northern Ireland is diluted in the totality of the United Kingdom by reserving legislative and constitutional matters to Westminster, and by providing local government institutions in Northern Ireland whereby the elected representatives of the two nations in Ireland can administer local services and deal with the hundred and one practical problems on which they have everything in common and about which they are quite capable of agreeing without any disloyalty to their ultimate constitutional aspirations, upon which, of course, they cannot agree.

That is why I welcome the proposals of the Official Unionist party in "The Way Forward". Its limited—and it is important that they are limited—realistic recommendations, combined with the goodwill that,

[Mr. Peter Lloyd]

despite my harsh criticisms, I find pervades the forum report, provide something upon which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State can build or, as he might put it, make political progress. I hope that he will respond to the suggestions and offers made earlier by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneux). However, I go further than that. The Republic has within its power a crucial self-denying contribution to make to that progress if only it can bring itself to do so. When politicians from the South refer, as they often do, to Northern Ireland as a failed political unit, they frequently do so with a relish that almost implies that they would be sorry if it actually succeeded. I do not believe that that is because they want the violence, tensions and hatred to continue. Indeed, I am sure that they do not. I think they merely feel that it must be bringing the peace of a united Ireland closer. But I also suspect that at the back of their minds some of them may have the uneasy feeling that if the North ever settled down reasonably happily within the United Kingdom, it might be lost for ever to the Republic.

However, I am sure that, on the premises of the forum's own arguments, that logic is faulty in both respects. The effect of IRA terror, as the forum admits, and of Southern irredentism, which the forum does not admit, has been to increase Unionist distrust of the Republic and to reinforce the determination of the majority to keep it at a healthy distance. When the Unionists feel under threat—and they are under threat—their suspicions will naturally work overtime, and they will not find the confidence or opportunity to develop wide-ranging and relaxed relationships with the South—whose absence the forum rightly deplored—let alone with their own minority in the North.

That is why the best, and perhaps only practical, recommendation that the forum could have made to ease the problem in Northern Ireland, and to bring North and South closer together, would have been the repeal of sections 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution by which the republic claims the Six Counties. That would be a courageous and constructive step, but one no doubt beyond the present political possibilities of the Republic. But it would be no less unrealistic, and considerably more helpful, than the recommendations that the forum actually did make.

Of course, I am not saying, "Leave the Unionists alone and in the fullness of time they will come to see that their natural future lies properly with the Republic." I am not saying that the nagging fears of some people in Dublin that Northern nationalists might come to accept the union and forget Dublin has no basis. I am suggesting that they have the confidence of their own conviction that the Britishness of the Northern Unionists, though genuine enough as far as it goes, overlays an essential Irishness beneath which fear, prejudice, memories of the old ascendancy and a healthy respect for the current level of British social security payments combine to suppress.

If that is right, closer relationships with a prosperous, tolerant, undemanding Republic, combined with a minority in the North prepared to help the Province successfully, is more likely to liberate their natural Irishness, should it be there, than the murderous assaults of the IRA and the constitutional assaults of the Republic and of the Republican minority in the North.

One may then ask: where is the present justice for the minority, stranded unwillingly in the North, with which the forum was rightly concerned? They will have the same constitutional rights and liberties as the Unionists in the South enjoyed after 1922, which the forum thought satisfactory. They will have considerably more political influence than those Southern Unionists, if they care to use it effectively, and far more hope that majority opinion may, by reason and constructive example, be persuaded to move in the direction that they wish it to go than will ever be achieved by violence, non-co-operation and constitutional arm twisting.

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong): I am conscious that several hon. Members have been here all day and wish to speak. The Front Benches hope to catch my eye by 9.20.

8.42 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): The views expressed today by the Official Unionists and the Democratic Unionists are those that we should have expected. There is no change or departure from the line that they have advocated for the last 60 years and more. The contribution from the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Lloyd), to which I listened with interest, was along the same line.

It would be disastrous if the House came to the conclusion that there was no political solution to the trouble in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland's difficulties, troubles and tragedy should be seen in an international context. The immense harm that has been done to Britain's reputation as a result of what has happened there in the past 15 years should be recognised. Our friends abroad are deeply unhappy and puzzled at the continued failure to find a satisfactory political solution to Northern Ireland. Our enemies gloat.

One of the fictions to which the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) and other pro-Unionist politicians contribute is the idea that Northern Ireland is just like any other part of the United Kingdom—like Sussex, the midlands or Yorkshire. Northern Ireland is nothing of the kind. One must constantly bear in mind the history and events that led to the present difficulties.

However much Unionist and pro-Unionist politicians in the House dislike it, the explanation for much of the trouble is that, against the wishes and the will of the majority of people in Ireland as a whole, that country was partitioned. Some now say, on the basis of a document produced by the Unionists, that the Province should have devolution. The House should bear in mind that for 50 years Northern Ireland had a Parliament of its own. The document now produced by the Official Unionists quotes Edmund Burke who said:

"All government, indeed, every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter."

That is indeed a good quote. I only wish that in the 50 years that Stormont reigned, that sentiment had applied.

The solution does not lie in integration with the mainland. Northern Ireland is like no other part of the United Kingdom. If it were, we should not be taking part in a debate based on a document issued partly by a foreign Government.

If we carry on with our existing policy there will be little change in the years leading to the next century. On

some occasions, as now, less violence will take place, but all the unease and insecurity, tension and terrorism will continue on and off. Existing policies will result in a continuing tragedy for Northern Ireland.

Much has been said about the feelings of the majority community in Northern Ireland. The views and feelings of the minority community are also of great importance. The minority community, since partition, has felt isolated and alienated. The minority community does not identify with the rest of Britain. It would be puzzling if it did. It believes that its country was divided against its wishes and, understandably, it looks forward to a united Ireland. That is a sentiment with which, with my party, I sympathise. Within that minority community is an even more alienated section of young unemployed people whose chances of getting a job are remote, who live in bad conditions which are a breeding ground for the Provisional IRA and other terrorist organisations.

The forum report provides at least a basis from which to seek a political solution. However much I should like a united Ireland, I doubt whether it will happen for many years. I am opposed in all circumstances to terrorism. The idea that the majority community can be bombed and terrorised into a united Ireland is nonsense. The forum report not only condemns terrorism—which has not been emphasised enough by the Unionists today—it rightly argues that terrorism makes a solution more difficult.

Terrorism cannot provide a solution. I have constantly denounced terrorism. Last year, in Northern Ireland with a delegation, I met Mr. Adams, Mr. Morrison and others and made my views clear. I do not believe that they represent the Irish Republican tradition of 1798 and 1916. More important than my view is the fact that people in the Republic of Ireland do not apparently see them in that light either. I asked Mr. Adams, during our rather angry exchanges last September, "Why is it that when the provisional Sinn Fein contests elections in the Republic, it gets no more than a derisory vote?" He did not give, I think, a satisfactory answer.

I doubt whether a unitary Irish state is possible now. We talk about an alienated minority in Northern Ireland, but what would happen in a united Ireland where the present majority in Northern Ireland formed a significant minority? Could they identify with the Republic, its history and its traditions? Once the present majority community in Northern Ireland was part of a united Ireland, could we imagine it celebrating the events of 1916? We must recognise those facts.

That does not mean that there is no other solution. The forum report gave two alternatives. One was for joint authority, which could provide, I believe, a possible basis for negotiation with the Irish Government. However, I believe that the other alternative—a federal or confederal state—provides a more satisfactory solution. There is no reason why, within the framework of Ireland as a whole, there should not be two states with central authority resting in Dublin. If that had been proposed and acted on in 1920, so much of the tragedy that we have debated during the past few years would never have happened.

It is 98 years since Gladstone first introduced his home rule Bill. I do not want to quote anything that Gladstone said then, but he pleaded with the House in 1886 to take a balanced, overall position on Ireland. We know what

happened—the Bill fell, as did a later Bill. The events before and after the first world war led to the partition of Ireland.

After all these long years, one would hope that the House of Commons would understand the need to find a solution for that part of Ireland—and I stress Ireland—that remained with Britain after the settlement of 1922 of an Irish Free State, and thereafter the Irish Republic.

It is said that we must bear in mind the majority community, and I agree with that. But another view which must also be considered is that of the remainder of the people of Britain. If the Unionists take the view that they have a veto against the political progress that is necessary and desirable in the overall interests of Britain, there may come a time when the views of all the people in Britain need to be consulted.

I am not a great enthusiast for a referendum. However, if a British Government negotiated with the Irish Government, and the results are met with great hostility in Northern Ireland, it may be necessary—as it was with the Common Market in 1975—to ask the people of Britain whether they agree with the results of the negotiations. The final decision would always lie with the House of Commons.

I listened, of course, with great attention to the Secretary of State. I hope that the British Government will now show courage and resolve. Those have been lacking in Governments of both political colours. I do not pretend that it is a party issue. There has not been a great deal of difference in policies pursued over Northern Ireland by either the Labour or Conservative Governments. I regret that when the successful effort to destroy power sharing was made in 1974, there was not a greater resolve by the then Government. I hope that the Government will show the necessary courage and resolve to seek agreement with the Irish Government on the basis of the alternatives put forward in the forum report. The alternative is continuing tragedy, bloodshed and violence in Northern Ireland during the next 15, 20 and 25 years.

8.56 pm

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for squeezing me into the debate. I shall try to be as brief as possible.

The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), like many other hon. Members, looked too much to history and not enough to the immediate future. I shall look to the future and try to be more constructive. I welcome both this debate and the forum which has given rise to wide-ranging discussions and documents. I recognise the effort involved in producing the forum report. It is easy to understand why it has been so heavily criticised by so many people. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) was probably wrong in his criticism. It is wrong to say that all it contained in solutions was what has been coming out of Ireland since de Valera.

If we probe deeply into the report, we find significant points. I welcome its total and outright condemnation of violence. The report has been signed by the Fianna Fail party—even if it has tried since to distance itself from it—whose constitution lays claim to unity, which shows that it recognises that there are alternatives.

Another significant commitment was that of the nationalists to provide full and fair protection for the rights and aspirations of the Unionists. That is quite unprecedented. It shows that the question of unity lies with

[Mr. Henry Bellingham]

Ulster and that the consent of the North is, therefore, an essential precondition. It is illogical to pressure Britain to procure consent by withdrawing Ulster's guaranteed right to remain in the United Kingdom. Surely consent procured by revoking that right is unacceptable. That point should not be lost on the authors of the report.

The recommendations in the report must be seen against that background. We must be realistic about the possibility of consent becoming possible in the near future—it will not. That leaves a great deal to be done by the South in trying to make way for any future constitutional changes. The South must be made more acceptable to Unionist traditions in the North. That point was mentioned in some detail in the report. It was never meant to be the last word. As Dr. FitzGerald said, it is an effort to start a dialogue. I welcome the dialogue getting under way with renewed vigour in the immediate future. I look forward to the summit later this year, to great economic ties and links, and to greater cross-border security.

As the hon. Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) pointed out, because the violence is spreading to the South and policemen are being killed there, there is a greater realisation that both communities and traditions are in the same boat. I welcome the referendum of 14 June which gave British people in Southern Ireland the right to vote. I must be one of the few Members of this House who will be entitled to vote in the Republic of Ireland. Patrick Hennessey, of the Irish embassy, will be pleased to hear that I shall in future be exercising my right to vote in the South.

We are led to the inexorable conclusion that the immediate emphasis must be in Ulster itself, and that brings us to consider the various other documents, such as the alliance paper on joint sovereignty, a document to which reference has not been made in the debate. That finally rejected the argument for joint sovereignty, stressed the importance of the Assembly, and stated:

"Stable government will not be restored to Ulster by a scheme which is not well supported and which does not carry with it the consent of the people of the North."

I am afraid that the DUP document—that issued by the Democratic Unionist party—like the speech of the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley), was coloured by its view that there should be no concessions to the nationalist viewpoint. It did not give an inch to the understandable aspirations of the minority in the North. It was coloured also by unnecessary alarmism and by a vicious anti-Papism that I found thoroughly distasteful.

However, the document was positive about the Assembly, especially in its final chapter entitled, "The Way Ahead," in which it mentioned, rightly in my view, that

"direct rule is totally unacceptable and is tolerated only with a growing impatience" and it looked more and more to the Assembly as the way forward.

I was pleased to note that the OUP—the Official Unionist party—paper concentrated greatly on local government in Northern Ireland. It was realistic about the possibility of consent becoming available. At the same time, it was sympathetic to the minority tradition in the North. I welcomed that sympathy and thought that the document was extremely positive on that aspect.

I was also interested to read the comments in it about a Bill of Rights, which must be a possibility demanding

further exploration and discussion in the future. Its paragraph on administrative devolution had much to recommend it, when it said:

"The time is now right for both communities in Northern Ireland to realise that essentially their problems will have to be solved in Northern Ireland by their political representatives and that any further prospect for them and their children is best provided for in Northern Ireland."

That obviously means that the medium through which those problems can be solved is the Assembly. The infrastructure is there. The only people who are not there are the representatives of the SDLP.

We heard months ago that after the forum was established the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) might think of joining the Assembly. We then thought that after the European elections he would think about going in. He had a good excuse for not going in while he was working on the forum report, but now he has no excuse for not going into the Assembly. I appeal to him tonight, in the words of my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates) to put as much as he can into Northern Ireland and not just to take, for unless the SDLP goes into the Assembly it will not work. If it goes in, it can work.

There are functions waiting to be rolled to the Assembly. There is scope for the minority to have a real say, through the Assembly, in how Northern Ireland is run—for example, through the chairmanship of committees. Paragraph 5.3 of the forum report points out that that is the best way to promote reconciliation between the two major traditions.

I welcome the unequivocal statement in the forum report that Ulster's future lies within Ulster itself. Perhaps to an extent the report tried to put the horse before the cart by saying that a solution to terrorism and murder could not be found until we had a major political solution. I do not believe that we can even contemplate a major political solution until we have a solution to the local political difficulties. The only way to get that is through the Assembly, through the existing framework, and that is why I urge the hon. Member for Foyle, for goodness sake, to do his best to make it work. If as a result of the forum report and the other documents the hon. Gentleman goes into the Assembly and makes it work, those documents could be seen by history as representing a major turning point in Irish history.

9.5 pm

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): The opportunity to discuss the underlying problems in Northern Ireland rather than to react to the symptoms of the problems is enormously welcome. I agree with the Secretary of State that the line taken in the forum report and by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer), who spoke from the Opposition Front Bench, is unrealistic. We shall not see the reunification of Ireland by consent, for that consent is not forthcoming. That is clear from what has been said by those who represent the Loyalist community in the House and from the development of history since partition, especially since 1969.

The debate has been enormously unrealistic—

Mr. Archer: Did I hear my hon. Friend correctly? Did she say that the line taken by the Opposition Front Bench was that consent to reunification would never be forthcoming? If so, I obviously failed to make myself clear.

Ms. Short: Not at all. I said that I disagreed with the line taken by my right hon. and learned Friend, which was to advocate the reunification of Ireland by consent. I do not believe that that consent will be forthcoming. If we are serious in advocating the reunification of Ireland, we shall have to face that reality. If the consent is not forthcoming, we shall be fudging the issue and not being entirely honest about what we would have to implement if we were in Government.

The debate has been worryingly unrealistic about the seriousness of the situation in Northern Ireland. It has been suggested that if only there could be a little more talking we might suddenly make masses of progress. There has been much talking through many Administrations, and many previous Secretaries of State for Northern Ireland have found that they could not get anywhere with their way of talking. There is no likelihood that any of the hints and suggestions that have been made today are likely to be any more productive. The situation in Northern Ireland is more polarised than it has been for a long time.

The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) made an aggressive, startling and shocking speech and then left the Chamber. He did not listen to any of those who succeeded him. The hon. Gentleman enjoyed an increased vote in the recent European elections and in the 1983 general election the Provisional Sinn Féin achieved 43 per cent. of the nationalist vote. It sustained that result in the recent European elections and it looks forward to increasing it when the next local government elections take place.

In Northern Ireland we see a society that is wracked by violence. There is high and increasing unemployment, and there are enormous social problems. We live in an economic period in which there is likely to be further increases in unemployment and we shall have to face the tension that is likely to flow from that. We all know what will come about.

In my view, Britain should, must and one day will reunify Ireland by seeking the consent of the people of Ireland and not looking only to the Loyalist community in the North for their consent. That is the policy that I advocate, and I hope to persuade my party to adopt it and implement it when it forms the next Labour Government. I believe seriously that it is the only solution to the problems of Northern Ireland and that it will be implemented in due course.

I shall explain why I take that view by referring to the recent history of Northern Ireland. Ireland was partitioned against the will of majority of the Irish people. Many of those who had come from Britain to live in Ireland during the period when Britain ruled Ireland were opposed initially to home rule and, secondly, to Irish independence. That is not an unfamiliar attitude because we have seen it in Rhodesia and southern Africa. Those who did well in colonial times resisted independence and democracy. It was exactly the same instinct that resisted independence and democracy in Ireland.

When it was clear that independence was unstoppable, the British in Ireland came out in favour of partitioning Ireland. It was an odd solution because the full Province of Ulster, as they called it, would not have provided a majority. The Six Counties were taken because only in that small unit would they have a majority, although they left as many in the Protestant community in Northern Ireland out of the Six Counties as were included. It was a desperate last fling.

The British Government were not sympathetic to the proposal, so what did they do? They armed themselves. They prepared to use force illegally to gain what they wanted. That is how Northern Ireland came about—through the threatened illegal use of force. We now hear denunciations of the threatened illegal force on one side, but we must conclude that the threatened illegal use of force that one gets away with is all right and that anyone who wants to upset that order is beyond and outside the political pale. The man who led the threatened illegal use of force that brought about the partition of Ireland—Carson—did not just get his way; he was made a Law Officer, of all things, by a subsequent Tory Government.

I do not believe that many people would doubt that the partition of Ireland was wrong and regrettable on any democratic principle. If we had had a longer history and more experience of decolonisation, it would never have come about. I would argue, and would agree with anyone who argued, that a historical wrong is not a sufficient ground always to demand that it be put right. If a historical wrong becomes a reality, if Northern Ireland had developed a just democracy and a state which could treat its people equally, I would say, and I would think that every Opposition Member would say, "OK, let it be. It was wrong to partition Ireland, but if the people of Northern Ireland are happy to live together in that unit, so be it."

That is not the case. Since partition there has been the crudest gerrymandering and discrimination against the minority community because there was always the fear that the minority might become the majority. Those processes continued to keep them down and to keep them in a minority.

Something that we should face, but never talk about, is that if there had not been different levels of emigration from Northern Ireland, because of discrimination and different employment levels in the two communities, the nationalists would already be a majority in the North. The discrimination, injustice and gerrymandering were practised to maintain the false majority that had been created at the time of partition. Following partition and the establishment of Stormont, disgraceful practices continued. This Parliament and all British Governments of both parties ignored them, neglected Northern Ireland and allowed those practices to continue.

In 1969 there was an explosion in the minority community. It was demanding simple things—one person, one vote, an end to discrimination, equal opportunities for all communities—and people who marched and demanded those things were beaten into the ground by the so-called forces of law and order. Another pretence is that there is an impartial criminal justice system and an impartial state in Northern Ireland. There is the hypocrisy of the denunciations of the use of force and the unjust use of power when, in the case of Northern Ireland, the illicit use of force has been entrenched in the state machine.

Following 1969, and the shock felt by the world when focus was beamed on the practices that had been going on for so long in Northern Ireland and Great Britain began direct rule, Governments of both parties attempted to reform Northern Ireland, attempted to bring the discrimination to an end, and attempted to create a just and democratic state. If they had succeeded, I should not be advocating what I do today, but they failed. There is no just and democratic state in Northern Ireland. It is a mess.

[Ms. Short]

It is full of repressive legislation. There is clear evidence of continuing gross discrimination in employment and all other facets of life.

We can only conclude that Northern Ireland is unreformable. It is a corrupt little state. It was created so that one community could dominate another. People have lived with the constant paranoia that power might be lost. That has distorted the state's operations and prevented the development of a normal democratic and equal state. If I am right in that analysis, as I think I am, and I believe that many people agree with me in private—I have had conversations with Conservative Members in private, and, as many Conservative Members are aware, many members of the Conservative party agree with that analysis—the only solution for Northern Ireland is reunification and British withdrawal.

The other fact that must be taken into account, particularly by the intransigent Unionists, is that the majority of opinion in Great Britain wants withdrawal. That has been made clear in poll after poll for a long time.

Mr. Corbyn: Would my hon. Friend care to reflect that there is an overwhelming feeling among progressive opinion throughout the world that British troops should be withdrawn from Northern Ireland, that peace can come only by the British Government accepting that Ireland must be reunited, and that the first step towards that is the withdrawal of the British Army?

Ms. Short: I believe that everyone would like to withdraw the troops from Northern Ireland; there is no difference between any of us on that. The question is whether we can find the political solution that will make it possible. It is my view that only withdrawal in the context of the reunification of Ireland will bring that about. Of course, I recognise that that road would be difficult and dangerous. During the debate there have been clear threats from the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) that in that situation he would organise the use of force to resist the wishes of the British Parliament.

In Northern Ireland there is no "no risk" solution, but I believe that, if we aim in the direction that I have outlined, we shall get a solution which can be lasting and just. The situation that we now have—when it is argued that to try to bring about reunification would result in a bloodbath—is itself a bloodbath. In Northern Ireland, 2,000 people have died since 1969. That is the equivalent of 84,000 people dying in Great Britain. If that number of people had died because of political conflict in Britain, we would not tolerate the cause of that conflict, and the political priority to find a solution would be massive.

The truth for Northern Ireland is that it is safer and easier for British Governments to hold the current situation, and to let the death, the suffering and the discrimination continue than to have the guts to tackle the problem and find the ultimate solution.

9.16 pm

Mr. W. Benyon (Milton Keynes): I do not think that I am the only person in this House who finds the article written by the Taoiseach in the *Belfast Telegraph* last week a truly remarkable contribution. In that article, in the Forum Report and in "The Way Forward", there appears to be just a glimmer of light, and we must grasp the opportunity that it provides.

We know that the British presence is the only force at the moment that stands between anarchy and bloodshed— anarchy and bloodshed that could develop into a situation rivalling that in the Lebanon in its attractions to outside intervention. Of course, both sides of the political divide realise that, and a degree of irresponsibility is allowed to flourish in the vacuum. Both sides hide behind the skirts of the British Government. Extremists on both sides triumph over anyone putting forward solutions based on moderation and conciliation, and it is against that background that we must consider the Forum Report.

Unlike my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook), I reject the solution of full integration, because it seems to me simply to perpetuate and exacerbate the present situation. Likewise, I must reject the all-Ireland solution proposed in the Forum Report. It would have to be forced through. Indeed, the report itself says that it could be achieved only by agreement, and that is not likely to be forthcoming.

I supported my right hon. Friend in his efforts to set up an Assembly in Northern Ireland, because I believe very strongly that we shall never make progress until the people of Northern Ireland as a whole have responsibility for their own affairs. That is why I hope that Her Majesty's Government will at the very least discuss the two other solutions in the forum report—the federal/confederal state and the joint authority. I make no secret of the fact that I am strongly attracted to the latter, because it would allow both communities to develop with their separate identities within a strengthened territorial framework. It could bring in its wake such things as a combined police authority, all-Ireland courts, and a revised devolved constitution for the Province as a whole. Anyone who has any knowledge of the Province appreciates the difficulties that stand in the way. Extremists on both sides will be adamant in their opposition.

There is one hopeful aspect—this is all I have time for, so I shall end on this note. There is political stability at the moment in London and in Dublin. In both countries we have leaders of exceptional ability. I can only trust that they seize this opportunity quickly, because it may not recur for many years.

9.19 pm

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): I should like to reiterate our gratitude for the New Ireland Forum report and for the reports from other political parties in Northern Ireland in response to the forum report. Having given evidence as a Front-Bench spokesman for the Labour party to the forum, I should like to place on record my appreciation of the very skilful and efficient way in which it carried out its studies. It was an impressive exercise, and it deserves much respect and reading.

We should never forget that, because we are where we are in 1984, we have the advantage of hindsight over the past 15 years. If that tells us anything at all, it is that we should not allow those 15 years to be repeated or the experience to drag on indefinitely for another 10, 20 or 30 years. That is unacceptable.

We have a duty to those whose lives have been lost or torn apart by violence to do more than just condemn the violence. We are not historians; we are politicians. We are here to solve political problems. I have heard many references to history today, which sadden me in some respects. A political problem is in front of us today. Whatever happened in the past, it is our duty to solve the

problem today. That is why the forum report is important. We are talking about a process of which we are part. It is important to continue that process and to make sure that it does not pass away as others have done.

Like many hon. Members, I am sick and tired of standing here, or outside the House, condemning acts of violence. It is necessary to condemn acts of violence and the activities of paramilitaries on both sides, but that is not enough. Our job is to deal with the causes.

One of the things that saddened me about the speech by the hon. Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) was that he tried to deal with symptoms, not causes. As a doctor, if not as a politician, he should have known better than to use sticking plaster to deal with symptoms, in the hope that the causes would eventually go away. He talked of not being able to discuss the constitution of Northern Ireland but that is not possible.

One of the main causes of the trouble is the existence of the border and the way in which it was drawn. The hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) made that point powerfully. Nothing can change it. We must respond to and understand the problems that arise from the border. Sooner or later the border, which has so distorted the political, economic and social face of Ireland, must go.

Dr. Mawhinney: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that nothing will be solved in Northern Ireland if we remove a problem for half a million people and create a problem for a million people?

Mr. Soley: I am coming to that very point.

To return to the point that I was making to the hon. Gentleman, by talking of removing the possibility of discussing the border he was giving credence to the paramilitary view on the Republican side, that one cannot get change from the British because they will not allow one even to discuss the matter. I recognise that the border problem, as so many have said before, is that it is a line not merely on the map, but through the hearts and minds of men, women and children.

I am glad to reiterate the Labour party's policy of a united Ireland by consent, with no veto on political developments. The debate has, to a considerable extent, focused on the meaning of consent, and I want to say quite a lot about that.

We refer to unity by consent, because almost everyone in Northern Ireland as well as in Southern Ireland, with the exception of Provisional Sinn Féin, accepts that unity must be by consent. That is one reason. It is obvious that we would prefer to govern by consent. I accept the powerful argument that has been put forward by several hon. Members, that Ireland was divided without consent. They are right—it was. Look at the disastrous bloodshed to which that led. One cannot resolve the matter simply by reversing that. The tragedy is that, like so many things, particularly in the discussion of politics in Northern Ireland, the words begin to mean more than the reality. I do not mind whether the word "consent" is there or not. [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."] It is the reality that matters. This will please hon. Members, who should understand what I am saying before they say "Ah".

The reality is that 1 million people in the North-east corner of Ireland are not prepared to live in peace and harmony with the other 4 million. The reason why the political parties in the North and South, with the exception of Provisional Sinn Féin, accept the need for consent is

that they know that they could not deal with the problem if there were coercion. That is the essence of it. Therefore, words such as "consent" and "coercion" are irrelevant to the central issue, which is how to get 1 million people to live with 4 million people when there is resistance to it.

What upsets me and is so sad about the Government's position is that they say—the Secretary of State said it on Thursday as well as today—they cannot get consent. Of course, one will not get consent if one does not work or have a policy for it. If one does not work for consent, what does one do? The question that the Conservative Government have consistently dodged is what they would do about Northern Ireland if they did not work for the unity of Ireland in the long run. The Government do not have a long-run policy for Northern Ireland.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Miss Maynard) properly referred to this matter, and I have said it several times. I said it when I gave evidence to the forum. The essence of British policy since 1969 has been crisis management. I say that without wanting to criticise both present and previous Secretaries of State. I can understand how we have got into that situation. For much of the time, we could not have had anything but crisis management, but it should never become a long-term policy. That is what it has become for the British Government.

We would prefer it if all the parties in the North and South sat down to work out a solution for a united Ireland. I do not believe that it will happen tomorrow, just like that. I do not intend to sit down and wait for it, any more than my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) or any other member of my party does. We are working for something much more important than that and, if I may say so, something much more subtle. There is something terribly unsubtle about the Conservatives' approach to the problem.

I am fascinated by the way that Conservative Members say over and over again that they want the Dublin Government or the people of the South to change. The hon. Members for Fareham (Mr. Lloyd) and for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) said, "If only the people in the South would change." I agree that changes are necessary. The hon. Member for Fareham made the point—there is something in it—that it might reduce tension if the Dublin Government dropped their claim to Northern Ireland, but Conservative Members never put themselves on the other side of the fence and say, "Is not the logical opposite to that that Britain should drop its claim to Northern Ireland to reduce tension?" Think of the implications for both communities if one said that Dublin should drop its request for Northern Ireland to be part of the South. What effect would it have on the minority community? If one said that Britain should drop its desire to govern Northern Ireland, it would have a similar effect on the Unionists. Conservative Members fail to understand the position on the other side of the fence. They constantly attempt to make those people change instead of standing back and saying, as we should all say in this debate, "What can we contribute?"

Sir John Biggs-Davison rose—

Mr. Soley: I shall give way in a moment.

That typifies Conservative policy on Northern Ireland over many years. It is on what people in Northern Ireland and in the Republic should do, not what people in Britain

[Mr. Soley]

should do. This might head off the hon. Gentleman's intervention. Both the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) and for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) are different in this respect. They make it clear that Britain should integrate Northern Ireland fully into the United Kingdom. In that respect, they are different from the rest of the Conservative party, and in a very different wing.

Sir John Biggs-Davison: We are simply asking for a return to what the Irish Government agreed in 1925. In the tripartite agreement they accepted the border.

Mr. Soley: That is far too simple, and I shall not pursue it.

The weakness of the Government's position is that they have no policy. Yet everyone knows what is the real ideal of many Conservatives and, I believe, a significant number of Cabinet members. They would dearly love the Unionists to consent to a united Ireland. I am almost sick of hearing Conservative Members say, "You are basically on the right lines, Clive." I wish that they would say that loud and clear in the Chamber, because one of the most important aspects of the present situation is the uncertainty caused by the Government's lack of policy. The message that goes out from the Government is that they have no policy on Ireland. That being so, no one should be surprised if Provisional Sinn Fein increases its vote and the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) increases his majority. When there is gross uncertainty, people look for certainty. In the absence of leadership from Britain, people will look and vote for authoritarian parties and leadership of one form or another.

As I have said many times, neither Britain nor any British political party has ever treated Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. That is why the Unionists feel that they are slowly being betrayed. In this context, it is as well to remember the old saying in social work and psychiatry "Just because you are paranoid does not mean that you are not being got at." In his talks in Dublin the Secretary of State can say as often as he likes that Northern Ireland can stay in the United Kingdom, but the Official Unionists and the Democratic Unionists know that the future and procedures of Northern Ireland are being discussed with a foreign Government, which has always been unacceptable to them, as the hon. Member for Orpington and others well know.

If one cannot or will not coerce people, one must work for and win consent. We have already declared our intention to unite Ireland by consent with no veto on political development to that end. We have referred to the need for joint citizenship and to the importance of a British-Irish council to deal with human rights and culture, as well as the importance of setting up an all-Ireland economic development committee and of harmonising the economic, social and political institutions and benefits.

My hon. Friends the Members for Brightside and for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) asked what can be done without consent. I will give them an example. I have talked about an all-Ireland police force and court system. As we have said on a number of occasions, we are looking for a system in which, for instance, the police are recruited and trained on either side of the border and deployed as the two Governments think appropriate. I know that that upsets many nationalists, as well as many Unionists, but

I also know that many of them welcome it because it would bring them some security. The important point is that one can go ahead with that without a veto being applied.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Ladywood knows, the criminal justice system is the third arm of the state. That is why the Unionists are worried. They are worried about the third arm of the state being created without their consent. The issue of consent arises again, because we say that, before consent is won, we shall apply that policy with Dublin as we think appropriate and the British Government will still have the right to extend or end that programme. If my hon. Friends do not recognise that that is capable of winning consent and, above all, cannot be vetoed, they must ask themselves how unity can be imposed.

In all fairness, it must be said that many people rationally and fairly argue that Britain should withdraw, or set a date for withdrawal. In my judgment, even if that view can be justified in the first instance, it would lead to greater paramilitary activity and probably a smaller independent Northern Ireland. Although many people outside the House take that view—across party lines—I do not believe that they have thought through the full consequences.

Setting a date for withdrawal would be particularly dangerous, because it would line up the opposition. Provisional Sinn Fein does not argue for immediate withdrawal. Its attitude is commonly misunderstood. Provisional Sinn Fein believes that there should be a declaration of intention to withdraw and that the Unionists should then be disarmed. It is amazing that members of Provisional Sinn Fein should put forward that argument, when we have been trying to disarm them for 15 years without any noticeable success.

I cannot see that the Unionists would choose quietly to hand over their weapons either.

However, if we fail to respond to those arguments, we fail to respond to deep and powerful feelings outside the House to which my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) referred. He reminded us that many people in Britain are fed up with the problem of Northern Ireland.

I do not think that the violence will ever reach such a pitch that it induces us to pull out. In terms of violence, the Provisional IRA cannot win. However, we have to win the argument in the country as a whole. The House of Commons has ducked the argument. Hon. Members are heard to condemn the violence, but they are not heard to describe the opportunities, however they may see them.

The hon. Members for Orpington and for Epping Forest favour total integration, while the Labour party looks towards a united Ireland, arrived at by consent. We must debate those issues. Too often in the past we have excluded parts of the debate and allowed the paramilitaries to dictate the terms of debate.

If one refuses to discuss the constitution and if, like the Secretary of State, one says that the normal political process will never produce consent, one is telling Republicans who support the Provisional IRA and the INLA that the Brits will never give in as part of the normal political process. One is advising people to forget the constitutional nationalist parties and to join the IRA. If Conservative Members choose to ignore that powerful argument, they do so not at their own peril but at other people's peril.

Consent must never again be a veto on the wishes and aims of the people of Britain and Ireland as a whole. That must be clearly stated. Consent can be won, and we should never say otherwise. The Secretary of State talks of the difficulty of winning consent in Northern Ireland. We do not talk in those terms in other political situations. No political party in this House would accept that it could not win consent to govern the country.

All options must be openly discussed, and there must be pressure on the British Government to declare their view. The British Government must present a policy. We claim—uniquely among nations—that we do not mind where our border is. We say that if the people of Northern Ireland want the border where it is, it shall stay where it is. If they do not, we shall gladly wipe the sweat off our brow. The tragedy is that we are claiming that we have no view on where the border should be.

I believe that the British Government have a view. In reality, they do not wish the border to remain where it is. However, they do not say so openly. Why should not members of the DUP and of the OUP feel paranoid? I do not blame them. With a policy of a united Ireland by consent, they would know where they stood. If the Government merely state that they intend to continue to respond to the situation, those people do not know where they stand. They say that, at the same time, they will talk to the head of a foreign Government and enter talks at Civil Service level as well as at political level to achieve our aims. I defy any Conservative Member to suggest that people know where they stand in those circumstances. Conservative Members will certainly not convince the Unionist parties of that.

Perhaps the greatest betrayal of all is of the Unionist people of Northern Ireland, especially the working class Unionist people. They see themselves as being in the front line. They are the people who, ultimately, do the fighting. That is an interesting difference between the DUP and the OUP. The Unionist working class gave their blood on the soil in the belief that that would win the heart of their mistress in London. It did not. British Labour, Tory and Liberal Administrations carried on treating them as different and, above all, as Irish. We are still doing that, and they know it. The Unionist people are not stupid. They understand what is happening. Conservative Members treat them as though they are little children who need to be patted on the head and brought along. One of the most hurtful things of all is desperately to be trying to be a member of a family and constantly being pushed away. That is what the Tories are doing to the Unionist population. They have never been treated as British. They have always been—and I believe always will be—treated as Irish.

We have watched the tragedy of Northern Ireland tearing people's lives apart and costing lives and liberties in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain. As we have often said, great democracies are destroyed overnight not by individual acts, but by attrition. In the past 15 years, we have witnessed the attrition of civil rights, liberties and the democracy to which the people of Britain and Ireland have been accustomed for many years. If we do not respond positively to the forum, that process will continue and it will ultimately drag us all down with it.

9.41 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Nicholas Scott): I apologise in

advance to right hon. and hon. Members who have made important speeches to which I shall not be able to refer as, in common with the Opposition Front Bench, we have given up some time to enable hon. Members to speak. I hope that the House will understand. I am anxious to deal with some of the major points that have been made.

Running through the debate has been the theme that, perhaps in the next few months, the House, Northern Ireland and Ireland as a whole might have a chance to perceive what meteorologists call a window. There might be a gap in the clouds that will enable some action to be taken. That theme ran through much of what the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) and others said. We are encouraged in that view by the way in which the forum report respected, as I do not think any Republican position has done, the Unionist tradition in the North of Ireland and the way in which the Unionist document "The Way Forward" respected Nationalist aspirations and the national disposition in the North of Ireland. In both cases, perhaps it was more tone and language than content that mattered, but there are sufficient grounds for encouragement in both. Both documents were non-definitive and non-entrenched and both explicitly laid the path open for negotiation in future.

The scale of the problem is clear from the debate, but I believe that there is a widespread feeling in the House that today, the dangers of doing nothing outweigh those of trying to do something in the immediate future. It would be a gross dereliction of duty for the House not to try to find a way to avoid condemning another generation of Northern Ireland children to a society in which violence is seen as a normal part of the political process, and not to seek to avoid the threat of the influence of the advocates of violence throughout the island of Ireland and, increasingly, across the water in Great Britain. We must try. In the end, we hope to make significant progress, but if, at the beginning, the steps that we can take are small, we should not be disappointed, for the ultimate benefits can still be great.

I hope that when this debate is over, the real dialogues can begin—the dialogues between the parties in Northern Ireland, between those parties and Her Majesty's Government, and Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Republic of Ireland. We have to be clear on what our aims are for those dialogues. They are to create within Northern Ireland a system of government that will involve the two traditions and their political leaders in the decision-making process, at least on the day-to-day matters that affect the lives of the people whom they represent. Within these islands, we must build the closest possible working relationship between the sovereign Governments in London and Dublin.

Even that will be a daunting task, and it is not the first time that it has been attempted. Many will seek to undermine that effort, not least, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, the terrorists to whom any sort of improvement in the political position of Northern Ireland is anathema. If the tone of this debate is a guide for the opportunities of the next few months, we have a right to be moderately optimistic. I detect a growing willingness to listen, a growing awareness of the dangers of doing nothing, and a growing feeling that, within the island of Ireland, the nationalists and unionists must find a better and more enduring way to live together.

I now move on to the central argument that we have had today. The Labour party Front Bench has advanced a

[Mr. Nicholas Scott]

theory about consent, and the hon. Members for Sheffield, Brightside (Miss Maynard) and for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) put their view about progress without consent. I say to them, and I reinforce the point made by the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), that unification without the consent of Northern unionists would be no basis for enduring and stable government in the island of Ireland in any case. It would leave a desperate legacy of bloodshed and violence for years to come. For a perfectly good reason, no constitutional party in the Republic of Ireland advocates such a role, the Government of the Republic of Ireland do not do so, and neither does the SDLP. No British Government could honourably abandon their responsibilities in that way and leave a scene of bloodshed and turmoil for the foreseeable future.

Equally, I disagree with the line taken by the Opposition Front Bench in our debate. It makes a virtue of the fact that in the Labour party's policy document last year, it embraced the concept of Ireland being reunited by peaceful means on the basis of consent. Labour party Front Bench spokesmen have expanded on that policy today. As the hon. Member for Hammersmith put it in writing recently, it is essential to recognise that the intransigence of the Unionists stems from a feeling of insecurity, and that has been heightened by British ambivalence.

Subsequently, and this has been reiterated in today's debate, the Labour party has come to a policy by which the first step should be a clear and unequivocal commitment by Britain to a united Ireland. It believes that this would help to clear the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion. If one can believe that, one can believe anything. If both Governments in London and Dublin were to commit themselves to achieving unity by consent, the Labour party believes that we would make progress.

I ask the hon. Member for Hammersmith to consult his psychiatry. His proposal seems best designed to displace distrust and insecurity with paranoia. The cry of some unionists, "Not an inch" would be a rallying cry for violence in the streets. Any political development from his proposal would lead, to borrow a word from the right hon. Member for Down, South (Mr. Powell), ineluctably to a united Ireland, and it would be resisted to a bitter and bloody end. I beg the Labour party to understand that, for the foreseeable future, the only conceivable way out of the present impasse is to seek to design a structure in Northern Ireland within which both unionist and nationalist will be able to play their part in the day-to-day governance of the Province.

I did not take the same view as other hon. Members of the speech of the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley). He repeated some familiar themes but he did say that he was prepared to talk. He thought that when one had reached this sort of difficulty it was right for the elected representatives of the political parties in Northern Ireland to get together to see whether they could talk about a way out. I understand why he had to leave the House this evening, but in his absence I would say that it is useful to talk if those to whom one is talking do not have closed minds. I hope that as the talks begin he will play his part in ensuring that that is the background in which the talks take place.

Important and valuable though it is, "The Way Forward" should not be the last word of the Official Unionist party. Indeed, it says in the course of it that it

regards the proposals put forward as open to negotiation. I hope that will continue to be its position. The right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneux) will not expect me to agree with him about the role of the Assembly. Anybody who has had to deal with the Assembly since its establishment knows how well and effectively it has been pursuing the first of the two roles designed for it by the legislation.

The right hon. Gentleman seemed to be saying that progress along the local government route in a sense needed no quid pro quo from the nationalist people because both sides of the community would benefit from it. That is not what I understand the position to be. If he can convince the nationalist people and their representatives that that is so, so be it. While movement on the local government front can be part of an overall approach to the problems of local government, it is unlikely to be enough to secure agreement across the community divide.

The hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) made an important speech. His description of the alienation that exists in many parts of the nationalist community commanded the attention of the House, and hon. Members' minds should be concentrated on that problem for some time to come. He recognised the mutually exclusive and destructive doctrines of "Not an inch" and "Ourselves alone". Like others, encouragingly, he said that he was willing to talk, and the House will welcome that. I wonder whether, as he appeared to do, he should automatically rule out talks with those whose attitude is governed by prejudice. If we are to do that in Northern Ireland progress might be rather slow. We have to talk on an open-ended basis. He rightly outlined the need and reality for the basis of successful political process—consensus. I know that he will be anxious to play his part in it. I hope that he will and that one of the early steps that he will take in that regard will be to reconsider his party's attitude towards the Assembly and give it a go. That can provide the basis for such a consensus for which the House is entitled to look.

The Anglo-Irish parliamentary body was mentioned. It must be right that the initiative to establish that body lies with the two national Parliaments. Several people have mentioned that tier and its role today. We must all take note of that. My position remains that it must be for the Parliaments to take the initiative. If the will is there in those two Parliaments it would be right for the Government to give the whole process a fair wind and to help with the logistical and organisational arrangements for the establishment of such a tier.

Many times the problems of Northern Ireland have been seen as a triangle with the economy on one side, security on another and the political problem on the third. The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) suggested examples of the progress that has been made in the economy in Northern Ireland. We have to run fast in order to stand still, particularly in terms of unemployment and its impact on young people. Substantial progress has also been made against terrorism. I sometimes think that we give too little credit to the courage, commitment and determination of the security forces and their success in cutting terrorism down to its current level. That level is still unacceptable and still has to be worked on, as it will be, by those same security forces.

Without the third side—that of seeking to solve the political problem—the problems of Northern Ireland will endure. Therefore, we need a political system within

Northern Ireland to share the decision-making process, combined with the closest possible working relationship between London and Dublin. Today, inevitably, many of the difficulties of this process have been highlighted and, in particular, the problem of alienation was mentioned by the hon. Member for Foyle. But some of today's speeches may also have opened our eyes to opportunities for progress. As I said earlier, surely none of us would lightly throw away the chance to make progress, if one exists.

Those who represent Northern Ireland constituencies will not need reminding, but others may not be aware of the degree of co-operation across the political and sectarian divides that already takes place in Northern Ireland on several issues. At the top level the leaders of the political parties in Northern Ireland are able to come together to argue for inward investment for the Province and to present to the Government their cases on economic matters. On the health and education boards, Catholic, Protestant, unionist and nationalist work together for the good of those covered by their responsibilities. Many sporting, recreational and other bodies, too, cross those divides for the good of those who use their services.

Literally thousands of people in Northern Ireland work tirelessly across the sectarian divides—whether it is those at Corrymeela, Winnie Jordan in east Belfast, or those who work in the schools—seeking to find practical ways in which good can be done. We should not forget those who work so hard. Perhaps I may cite one small example that I found very moving. Recently I visited a medium-sized town in Northern Ireland where, coincidentally, the Roman Catholic and controlled secondary schools adjoin. Some 10 or 11 years ago it was necessary to build a double chain link fence between the two schools to keep the children apart. Today there is not one but two huge holes in that chain link fencing, and the children go backwards and forwards taking lesson together on occasions and working together on projects for the benefit of the local community. I just wonder whether it is too much to ask today that we might find a few more holes in a few other fences in Northern Ireland, as that might be of advantage to all the people in the Province.

We know and have been reminded today that there are still substantial dams of intransigence in Northern Ireland and a feeling still of fear on the part of both communities. It is a feeling of "them and us" that hits those of us from England very soon after we arrive. But one can also detect

strong currents of goodwill and co-operation, and we have seen some signs of that in the willingness to talk today in the House. It must be our hope that those currents will be strong enough to achieve that goals that we have set ourselves. It will not be easy. The whole House will want to wish the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties well as they set about the dialogue that I hope, and trust, will follow this debate. If they fail, the Government will not be able to neglect their responsibility in such matters. In the first instance, at least, we look to the dialogue to point the way forward.

The House may know that one of my responsibilities involves education in Northern Ireland. When I arrived in Northern Ireland, I was very conscious of the work of a man called John Malone. He was a prominent educationist and an innovator in education and community relations. I was struck by the following sentences from his obituary which appeared not long ago:

"Above all, he was sensitive to the cultural values of others and the importance to the individual of tradition and a sense of identity. Secure in his own tradition, in his strong moral values, in his clear perception of right and wrong—he could reach out with self confidence and abounding charity to other men and women, to draw from their cultural experience to enrich his own, and to aspire to a society characterised by tolerance and pluralism."

The task that the House must set itself is to build structures that will give the people of Northern Ireland in both their communities a sense of that self-confidence for the future—to the Unionists that they can remain a part of the United Kingdom for as long as they wish, and to the Nationalists that they will be fairly treated and that the relationship between London and Dublin will provide a secure guarantee for them—that will allow a society based on that tolerance and pluralism to emerge.

A common theme today has been that we should work towards that end. I trust that in the talks in the coming months, which I hope will be pursued with urgency, we shall see a way forward to ensure that future generations will not have to endure what those in Northern Ireland have had to endure for the past 14 years.

Mr. Michael Neubert (Romford): I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

[Continued in column 107]

PART 16 ends:-

Dublin Tel 292 28.6.84

PART 17 begins:-

Hansard Extract 2.7.84

