

NORTHERN IRELAND: ADVANCE COPIES

24

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This is a copy. The original has been extracted and closed 40 years.

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CONFIDENTIAL

IMMEDIATE

FM DUBLIN 261035Z NOVEMBER 79
 TO IMMEDIATE FCO
 TELEGRAM NUMBER 453 OF 26 NOVEMBER
 AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO BELFAST
 INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON BIS NEW YORK

W

NORTHERN IRELAND : CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT

1. GARRET FITZGERALD CAME TO SEE ME, AT HIS REQUEST, AT HOME ON THE EVENING OF 24 NOVEMBER. HE HAD, HE SAID, TWO "INFORMED SUGGESTIONS" WHICH HE ASKED ME TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION AND TO THAT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND. SINCE HE HAS LONG BEEN A FRIEND AND SUPPORTER OF JOHN HUME, WAS IN TOUCH WITH HIM FROM 22-24 NOVEMBER AND SAW BRID ROGERS ON 24 NOVEMBER, IN DUBLIN, IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY PROBABLY ORIGINATED WITH HUME.

2. THE "INFORMAL SUGGESTIONS" ARE THAT :-

(A) IN ORDER TO SHORE UP JOHN HUME'S POSITION AFTER HE BECOMES LEADER OF THE SDLP, WHICH FITZGERALD ASSUMES HE WILL, IT IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE THAT HUME BE RECEIVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND:

(B) THE AGENDA OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE DOCUMENT SHOULD BE SO "WIDENED" AS TO ENABLE THE SDLP TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT ALIENATING PAISLEY TO THE POINT WHERE HE WOULD REFUSE TO ATTEND.

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3. THE BACKGROUND TO THIS IS AS FOLLOWS, ACCORDING TO FITZGERALD. OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, BECASUE OF THE " POLITICAL VACUUM" IN NORTHERN IRELAND (A FAMILIAR THEME OF FITZGERALD) THE SDLP HAD SHIFTED THEIR POSITION SO THAT MUCH MORE EMPHASIS HAD BEEN LAID BY THAT PARTY UPON THE IRISH DIMENSION.*

*Passage deleted and closed, 40 years, under a
FOI Exemption @Wayland
22 October 2009*

*IT WAS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT HUME AND NOTHING COULD BE MORE CALCULATED TO ACHIEVE THAT THAN HIS BEING RECEIVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER. FITZGERALD KNEW THAT MALLON HAD INTENDED TO SEE MESSRS LYNCH AND O'KENNEDY ON 23 NOVEMBER IN DUBLIN (MY TELECON WITH NEWINGTON THAT DAY INFORMING HIM THAT DESPITE PRESS REPORTS THE TAOISEACH AND O'KENNEDY WOULD NOT SEE HIM) BUT HAD BEEN STOPPED FROM DOING SO BY HUME (WITH SOME ASSISTANCE FROM FITZGERALD) WHO TELEPHONED THE TAOISEACH'S OFFICE TO SAY THAT MALLON DID NOT REPRESENT THE SDLP AND IT WOULD THEREFORE BE QUITE WRONG FOR HIM TO BE SEEN BY MR LYNCH AND MR O'KENNEDY. HE DID NOT , SO FAR AS I KNOW, SEE EITHER, THOUGH HE DID MEET THE TAOISEACH'S MINISTER OF STATE, MICHAEL WOODS, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS.

4. ONE DIFFICULTY WAS, ACCORDING TO FITZGERALD, THAT MR LYNCH AND THE DFA WERE OUT OF TOUCH WITH THE SDLP. HUME HAD BEEN THE REAL LEADER FOR SOME TIME; NOT GERRY FITT. BUT BOTH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT AND HMG HAD DEALT WITH FITT AND HAD NOT TAKEN PROPERLY INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF HUME. FITT HAD BEEN AN EXCELLENT MAN IN WESTMINSTER TERMS BUT HE DID NOT FULLY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE SDLP. RELATIONS BETWEEN LYNCH AND HUME HAD BEEN BAD FOR A LONG TIME. HE HAD TRIED TO ACT AS A GO-BETWEEN. THE IMPLICATION HERE WAS THAT WHEN FITZGERALD RAN THE DFA, THINGS WERE MUCH BETTER SO FAR AS CONTACTS WITH THE SDLP WERE CONCERNED. I THINK THAT IS PROBABLY CORRECT. BOTH GOVERNMENTS WERE THEREFORE OUT OF TOUCH WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN THAT PARTY. I DISPUTED THIS SO FAR AS HMG WERE CONCERNED.

5. ON THE CONFERENCE, FITZGERALD SAID HE HAD THOUGHT, WHEN HE FIRST READ THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT THAT THE SDLP SHOULD ATTEND. HE STILL THOUGHT SO. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED THEY WOULD NOT, INDEED COULD NOT, BECAUSE THE IRISH DIMENSION SEEMED TO BE EXCLUDED FROM CONSIDERATION. MOREOVER, THE SOSNI HAD SAID HE WOULD RULE "OUT OF ORDER" ANY DISCUSSION OF THE IRISH DIMENSION AND THAT HAD PUT THE "TIN HAT" ON THINGS. I POINTED OUT TO HIM WHAT MR

HAD PUT THE 'TIN HAT' ON THINGS. I POINTED OUT TO HIM WHAT MR ATKINS HAD SAID IN REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARIES, ON 22 NOVEMBER AND HE SAID THAT HE ACCEPTED THAT BUT COMMENTED THAT THAT REFERRED TO RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC (NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) AFTER A REPRESENTATIVE BODY HAD BEEN ELECTED. SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE TO INTRODUCE THE IRISH DIMENSION AT THE CONFERENCE. HOW TO DO IT? HE RECOGNISED THAT PAISLEY, WHOSE OVERRIDING INTEREST WAS POWER, SHOULD NOT BE ALIENATED BUT HUME, WHO WANTED TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE AND TO NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION SHOULD SOMEHOW BE BROUGHT TO THE TABLE. WOULD IT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO 'WIDEN' THE AGENDA, HAVING, SAY, ANOTHER ITEM, CALLED 'OTHER MATTERS', WHICH COULD BE TAKEN TO COVER THE IRISH DIMENSION? HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF THE FCO AND NIO OFFICIALS, FOR BOTH OF WHOME HE SAID HE HAD THE GREATEST ADMIRATION, TO PRODUCE A FORMULATION WHICH WOULD ATTRACT HUME AND NOT REPEL PAISLEY. HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT HUME SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF DISCUSSING THIS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. SOMETHING USEFUL COULD COME OUT OF SUCH A MEETING.

6. ON THE DOCUMENT ITSELF, FITZGERALD SAID HE THOUGHT THE 'WEIGHTED VOTING' CONCEPTS IN SOME MODELS SHOULD INTEREST THE SDLP BUT THAT PARTY APPEARED TO THINK THAT THE DOCUMENT CAME DOWN HEAVILY ON THE SIDE OF THE MAJORITY. HE HIMSELF DID NOT THINK THAT WAS SO. I STRESSED THE FLEXIBILITY OF HMG'S APPROACH IN THAT CONTEXT AND IN OTHERS DURING THE CONVERSATION.

7. I UNDERTOOK TO CONVEY HIS VIEWS TO YOU.

8. THE ONLY COMMENTS THAT I THINK SHOULD BE VENTURED FROM DUBLIN ARE AS FOLLOWS. FITZGERALD CLEARLY ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HIS APPROACH TO ME. HE WANTS THE CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE WITH THE SDLP PARTICIPATING. HE IS, AS YOU KNOW, HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, SOPHISTICATED IN HIS POLITICAL VIEWS: VERY WELL VERSED IN NORTHERN IRELAND AFFAIRS, WITH MANY CONTACTS IN THE NORTH AND HE IS 100 PERCENT AGAINST VIOLENCE. OF COURSE, HE HAS HIS OWN AXES TO GRIND AND I CANNOT ENTIRELY EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT AT SOME STAGE HE MIGHT, FOR HIS OWN POLITICAL PURPOSES, REVEAL OUR CONVERSATION. HE RESPECTS MR LYNCH AND HAS ALWAYS TOLD ME THAT THE LATTER'S HEART IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE SO FAR AS NORTHERN IRELAND AND ANGLO-IRISH AFFAIRS ARE CONCERNED. I THINK HIS INFLUENCE WITH THE SDLP IS AT PRESENT MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN MR LYNCH'S.

9. PLEASE SEE ALSO TELELETTER FROM STAPLES TO GEE NIO BELFAT (COPIED TO NEWINGTON RID) REPORTING THE FORMER'S CONVERSATION WITH PADDY HARTE, ON 23 NOVEMBER.
HAYDON

IMMEDIATE