

NORTHERN IRELAND

PS (2)
 PS/LADY YOUNG / *MR ROSTON*
 PS/PUS
 MR GOODALL

HD/RID

Dep. HD/PUSD (2)
 HD/INFO DEPT
 HD/NEWS DEPT

PS/ S of S
 PS/MR R ANDREW, OAB 1/56
 MR BRENNAN
 MR BURNS
 MR J LYON

NIO

SIR R ARMSTRONG
 DIO } CABINET OFFICE
 PS/ NO 10 DOWNING STREET - (3)

UNCLASSIFIED

FM DUBLIN 081115Z MAR 85

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 124 OF 8 MARCH 1985

INFO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST), WASHINGTON AND BIS NEW YORK

ANGLO-IRISH TALKS

1. TODAY'S IRISH INDEPENDENT CARRIES AN INTERVIEW WITH MR BARRY BY ITS NEWS ANALYSIS EDITOR, O'BYRNES, UNDER THE HEADING 'WE ARE TALKING TO THE BRITISH AGAIN BUT IT IS VERY DELICATE'.

2. O'BYRNES SAYS THAT 'PETER BARRY IS A VERY CIRCUMSPECT MAN WHEN IT COMES TO DISCUSSING AT WHAT STAGE THESE TALKS ARE, AND WHERE THEY ARE LEADING', AND COMMENTS THAT THE DELICACY OF WHAT IS AFOOT CAN BE GLEANED FROM MR BARRY'S COMMENT THAT HE DOESN'T 'WANT TO BE EITHER OPTIMISTIC OR PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME. I DON'T WANT TO BUILD UP HOPES, ON THE ONE HAND, OR TO CAUSE UNNECESSARY FEARS TO ARISE'.

3. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT MR BARRY HAS DECIDED AGAINST SAYING HE WAS MISQUOTED IN HIS 'APOLOGY' IN LAST WEEK'S MAIL ON SUNDAY (MY TELNO 109). PRESSED ON THE POINT BY O'BYRNES HE EXPLAINED

'I REGRETTED THAT THE FACT THAT MRS THATCHER SPOKE THE WAY SHE DID AT HER PRESS CONFERENCE, AND I REGRET THE FACT THAT WE RESPONDED IN THE WAY THAT WE DID HERE'.

THE ROW WAS NOT ONLY UNHELPFUL BUT UNNECESSARY, OVERSHADOWING 'ALL THE GOOD WORK WE HAD DONE AT CHEQUERS'.

4. MR BARRY SAID THAT HE WAS NOW

'IN NO DOUBT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS TAKING THE PROBLEM OF THE NORTH VERY SERIOUSLY...FROM MRS THATCHER DOWN THEY ARE VERY SERIOUS IN SEEKING WITH US A SOLUTION',

BUT ADDED THAT HE WAS 'NOT AT ALL HAPPY ABOUT RENEWED MEDIA SPECULATION WHICH HAD NOT EMANATED FROM HIS DEPARTMENT, BUT RATHER FROM LONDON OR BELFAST. THE CURRENT TALKS ARE 'EXTREMELY SENSITIVE AND THIS KIND OF SPECULATION IS NOT HELPFUL AT ALL, AND IS ONLY CREATING FEARS AND UNNECESSARY CONCERN TO BE ROUSED'.

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IT WAS 'FAR TOO EARLY' TO BE SEEKING TO PUT A DEFINITIVE SHAPE ON ANY AGREED ACTION PROGRAMME BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. 'WHEN THE GOVERNMENTS ARE READY, THEY WILL MAKE A STATEMENT, AND UNTIL THAT TIME, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY FURTHER SPECULATION'.

5. ALTHOUGH MR BARRY HIMSELF REFUSED TO BE DRAWN ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE TALKS, O'BYRNES HAS PUT TOGETHER A SECTION ON THIS FROM OTHER SOURCES, UNDER THE HEADING 'PAINFUL PROGRESS TOWARDS JOINT MEASURES'. REFERRING TO SUGGESTIONS CURRENT IN RECENT WEEKS, AND A POSSIBLE NEW ROLE FOR THE AIIC AS THE VEHICLE FOR GIVING EXPRESSION TO A MORE FORMAL ROLE IN THE NORTH FOR THE DUBLIN GOVERNMENT, O'BYRNES SAYS THAT

'NO FINAL STRUCTURES EMBRACING ALL THESE QUESTIONS HAVE YET BEEN AGREED, NOR WILL THEY BE FINALLY NAILED DOWN UNTIL THE NEXT FULL SUMMIT BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND MRS THATCHER. THAT IS NOW UNLIKELY UNTIL AFTER THE NORTH'S LOCAL ELECTIONS ON MAY 15. THE BRITISH SIDE IN PARTICULAR IS CONCERNED THAT ANY DISCLOSURE OF AN AGREEMENT PRIOR TO THEN WOULD INEVITABLY MEAN THAT THOSE ELECTIONS WOULD BE TURNED INTO A REFERENDUM ON THE PACKAGE, AND COULD BE QUICKLY RENDERED STILL-BORN'.

O'BYRNES CONCLUDES THAT

'IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE CURRENT TALKS, THEY WILL BE A GREAT DEAL MORE MODEST THAN THE POWER-SHARING COUNCIL OF IRELAND FORMULA AT SUNNINGDALE, OVER A DECADE AGO. DUBLIN'S HOPES ARE NOW PINNED ON COMMENCING A PROCESS THAT CAN, FIRST OF ALL, END THE VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH; ENSURE A FAIR DEAL FOR BOTH COMMUNITIES AND PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR GREATER COMMUNAL HARMONY THERE, AND PROMOTE POSITIVE LINKS, BASED ON TRUST BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH'.

6. A FINAL SECTION OF O'BYRNES' FEATURE IS DEVOTED TO MR BARRY'S COMMENTS ON THE IRA, AND SPECIFICALLY THE RECENT WAVE OF VIOLENCE. MR BARRY IS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT HE HAS NO DOUBT THAT

'PART OF THE IRA'S PLAN AT THE MOMENT IS TO PROVOKE A REACTION FROM THE BRITISH AND UNIONISTS AGAINST THE NATIONALIST MINORITY',

AND ALSO TO TURN THE MINORITY COMPLETELY AGAINST THE RUC. BUT:

'NEWRY DOESN'T AFFECT THE TALKS IN ANY WAY WHATSOEVER. BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE DETERMINED TO GO AHEAD. IF WE WERE DEFLECTED, THEN THE IRA WOULD BE THE WINNERS. THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT THEY WANT TO HAPPEN'.

7. FCO PLEASE PASS IMMEDIATE LYON, NIO (L).

GOODISON

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