

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES****IRELAND**

**Reference Code:** 2003/13/10

**Title:** Report by Taoiseach Jack Lynch on a meeting with British Prime Minister Edward Heath at a European Community summit meeting in Paris on 21 October 1972, discussing political progress and security issues in Northern Ireland.

**Creation Date(s):** 23 October, 1972

**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 3 pages

**Creator(s):** Department of Foreign Affairs

**Access Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

As there was no notetaker present (nor anyone else) at my meeting with Mr. Heath at the International Conference Centre, Paris, at the conclusion of the Summit meeting on Saturday, 21st October, 1972, I have made the following notes as a brief record of the meeting:-

It commenced shortly after 1 a. m. on Saturday, 21st October and concluded shortly before 2 a. m.

I referred to the worsening situation since the Darlington Conference and therefore the need for maintaining political initiative or better still providing a new one. The Darlington Conference was far from representative although I appreciated why Mr. Whitelaw went ahead with it. Therefore only different unionist proposals were discussed, and although the views of groups who did not attend were known I hoped the Green Paper would not reflect only Unionist opinion in different shades. If it was true that this Paper will not appear for several weeks there was a very dangerous vacuum to be filled.

Mr. Heath interjected that he had seen and approved the White (sic) Paper before he left for Paris and it would appear shortly. I nevertheless said I felt that this would not be enough and I repeated once again my argument for quadripartite talks.

I said that the proposed publication, Green or White, should contain more than generalities about equal treatment for minorities; it should be very specific not only about fair treatment in social and political spheres (i. e. jobs, housing, public representation) but in Security matters as well. I had very convincing and up-to-date evidence of even greater disillusionment among the minority population especially in West Belfast because of their treatment by the British Army (see Ruaf Cúnta's report of my meeting with Canon Murphy, Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Conaty). I listed the main complaints put forward by these men. He assured me that the military were instructed to be impartial and he felt sure that they were carrying out instructions. They had been getting quite sizeable hauls of arms from extreme unionist quarters. I highlighted the need for jobs - efforts to be seen to create job opportunities in West Belfast (male unemployment now running to 47%) and west of the Bann.

- 2 -

He said he did not accept that Whitelaw was in any way relinquishing his control over the Army, and he thought that he and his Junior Ministers were effective and in control of administration inside Stormont Castle.

So far no decisions had been taken to call off the local elections although U. D. A. had threatened "to shoot them up". If so, he could imagine what might happen at a Plebiscite, about which he knew my views.

He said the (Green) Paper would be specific about there being no integration and no return to the status quo, ante March 1972.

We then discussed security matters. I told him of my disappointment at the contents of the communique issued after our meeting in Munich. I referred specifically to the alleged 28 "border incidents" in August. I told him the results of our check on these.

It was helping nobody to exaggerate the position. There was no point in telling the Irish Government to do more. We had no inhibition about doing what was necessary and possible. In fact suggestions coming from Westminster could be inhibiting.

I asked him again as I had done in Munich what his and his Government's long-term thinking was but he did not go beyond the Green Paper and the proposals that would follow in the form of a Bill before Westminster.

The Plebiscite (and the question or questions) would have to be legislated for as they had no provision for such in English law nor indeed experience. He did not know how long this would take but ~~it would~~ it would be unlikely to be introduced until February when Westminster resumed after the Christmas recess. Any changes in the structure of Northern Ireland would also have to be legislated.

As a tangible suggestion, now that we were both in the EEC and a regional policy now having been endorsed by the Summit, I put it to him that our respective officials might get together to see what we might do together in a border area, preferably west of the Bann, without regard to the Border itself. If this appealed to him we could perhaps announce after the meeting that we had agreed to have such a proposition examined. It would help to relieve the feeling of frustration that people had. He would not like to have anything said about this until he had an opportunity to think about it.

- 3 -

P. S. After foregoing was typed I received a request to see the British Ambassador and he called this afternoon. He had a message from Mr. Heath's Private Secretary which the Prime Minister was anxious that the Ambassador would convey to me personally. It was to the effect that the Prime Minister felt he had been too oncoming about the Green Paper, its contents and time of publication when he spoke to me in Paris. I told the Ambassador that all he told me was what is contained in the foregoing notes, viz. that the Paper was shortly to appear and it would rule out integration, etc.; that I had told the Prime Minister that I would confine my comment to the Press on our talks to my pressing for quadripartite talks and his reluctance to agree; that he need not have worried, I was not going to go beyond that. The Ambassador said that he had seen it himself but not soon enough to have it altered before it went for printing. Some parts of it, he thought, would be too our liking - other parts perhaps not.

He enquired what further action we might be taking in relation to the I. R. A. (he had in mind a recent interview that the Minister for Justice gave) but I told him that we were keeping the whole situation under review and we would take action, legislative or otherwise, as we saw it to be necessary. He enquired about the possibility of Tory Junior Ministers and responsible back benchers contacting their counterparts here and I said I would encourage this.

Before he left I told him that I had expressed disappointment to his Prime Minister about his Munich communique. I also mentioned that we "did not like" the fact that the British A. G. appeared to disclose the subject matter of confidential talks that I had with him and that some of our Ministers had with British representatives.

J. L.

23. 10. 72.

P. S. During the course of my talks with Mr. Heath, he referred to the hostility to Ireland and the Irish Government expressed at the recent Conservative Party's Conference. This feeling was reflected in the country.

J. L.