

NATIONAL ARCHIVES**IRELAND**

Reference Code: 2005/7/633

Title: Letter from [John Kelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Taoiseach] to Liam Cosgrave, Taoiseach, in advance of a meeting in London on 4 September, 1974, providing a list of points to be covered in the discussion on Northern Ireland.

Creation Date(s): 3 September, 1974

Level of description: Item

Extent and medium: 3 pages

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Access Conditions: Open

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

blair
An
lwk
6/9/74

Phel.
Munby
To see, rd., and for file Uimhir.....

lwk 519174, Kenner

519

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

NORTHERN IRELAND

Taoiseach

to

You may wish/have the following points covered in the discussion on the North at tomorrow's meeting -

- (1) Timing of announcement of meeting The British want to know when we would like to have the meeting announced. They say that the nearer to the actual time of the meeting the announcement is made the better - for security reasons. The main other consideration affecting the announcement would, I think, be whether or not the S.D.L.P. are to be met. If they are to be met before the meeting, then the announcement should be made as soon as possible - so that we do not seem to be running to London at their behalf. If the S.D.L.P. meeting is to be held after the meeting with Mr. Wilson, then the British argument for an announcement as near as possible to the actual time of the meeting is the one which, I think, must prevail.

All of this would suggest that the announcement be made on Monday next.

- (2) Composition of delegation It is assumed that you will be accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs - who would be the counterpart of Mr. Rees who will be taking part in the meeting, after your initial tete-a-tete with Mr. Wilson.

The Tánaiste who normally accompanies you at these meetings will, it is understood, be on leave. I do not know if you wish to consider the question of a substitute.

- (3) Meeting with S.D.L.P. At the meeting in Dublin on 20th August, the Minister for Foreign Affairs suggested to the S.D.L.P. delegation that they might meet again "in about a fortnight's time" when had carried out an in-depth review of the Northern situation.

This could be taken, I assume, as including a meeting either before or after your meeting with Mr. Wilson.

It is a matter for consideration whether, in fact, the S.D.L.P. meeting should take place before or after the Wilson meeting.

Whatever happens, it is important that if the S.D.L.P. are adopting an aggressive policy, the Dublin line should not be too closely associated with them.

- (4) Main thrust of meeting with Mr. Wilson You may wish to discuss this point specifically at the meeting.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

(2)

It would seem that the theme to be sold should be the continuing concern of Dublin with Northern affairs. This could be the sort of ~~weight~~ ^{weight} against the Loyalists ~~which~~, which the S.D.L.P. are seeking, without at the same time going as far as some members of that party have gone at recent meetings. In this sense the meeting could be an expression of the "Irish dimension", without, as yet, giving it any institutional form.

The opportunity might be taken of emphasising that the unity we want is unity achieved only by consent - and in no other way.

The opportunity might be taken ^{also} of stressing the importance, in view of the forthcoming election, of maintaining the bipartisan policy in the U.K. - though on this subject we are on rather delicate ground. Though we cannot but be concerned with the subject, it is primarily a matter of internal British politics. The fact that you will be discussing the same subject, broadly, with both Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath will, however, serve to strengthen the idea of bipartisanship.

The S.D.L.P. are making much of the argument that it is necessary to split the Unionist monopoly. One way of doing this - and perhaps the most effective way - is to have the British spell out to them, more or less precisely, the consequences of any attempt to "go it alone". The fact that they could ~~lose~~ ^{lose} the British subsidies etc. totalling more than £400 million a year, or nearly half their gross domestic product, and the support of the British Army, as a form of security umbrella, should, if pushed home discreetly at meetings with them, convince even the most ardent isolationist that there are very considerable dangers in attempting to cut the British link arbitrarily. This discussion may also provide some opportunity of stressing the disadvantages to the British, from their own point of view, of withdrawing ~~proclivity~~ ^{proclivity precipitately}. However, this whole question of withdrawal or nonwithdrawal is so dangerous a one, in so far as we are concerned, that it would probably be well to touch ~~lightly~~ ^{lightly} on it.

The British are pushing hard on the question of the security meeting. While it would seem to be a ~~party~~ ^{party}, in so far as we are concerned, that the meeting should be dominated by the question of security, it is quite ~~polite~~ ^{probable} that the subject will assume considerable importance during the discussions. The British will probably want to give it great prominence - with the idea that by having open co-operation between the ~~guards~~ ^{guards} and the R.U.C., with possibly the Army, on both sides of the border, they can achieve some measure of identification by the minority with policing and security generally in the North. At the same time, it would be well to stress to them that the more publicity they give to the meeting, before it actually takes place, the less likely it is that it will produce useful results - which we both want. After all, it is a security Meeting and one does not talk in the newspapers, or from the roof tops of what is discussed at that type of meeting.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

(3)

ballint to

You will recall that the Government at their meeting on 19th July, 1974, decided, on the recommendation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that an Anglo Irish security meeting should be held in September and that, prior to this meeting, a meeting of officials should be arranged. It would be well to clear up any misunderstanding between Foreign Affairs and Justice on the interpretation of this decision, before the Wilson meeting. Personally, I think it is important, if the meeting between Ministers is to have practical consequences, that there should be a meeting between officials beforehand to discuss highly technical subjects such as methods of radio communication, methods of identifying the origin of explosives, the latest developments in ~~blastics~~ *blastics*, intelligence on bomb disposal etc. The British have already submitted a number of papers on these subjects which go into them in a highly technical way.

~~Finally~~ You may wish to discuss with the Minister for Foreign Affairs the question of Mr. Rees's handling of Northern affairs. This of course would not form part of any general theme of the forthcoming meeting. Finally, on policing it will probably be necessary to stress that while we appreciate the reasons for recent moves, we would stress the extreme danger of providing a force, with or without discipline and arms, which has not got the support and trust of the minority. To push on with this, with ^{our} minority identification, is to provide the sort of private army which will only heighten tensions and lead ultimately to a doomsday situation.


3rd September, 1974.