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Uimhir Thagartha

Ref. No.



ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Department of the Taoiseach

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2

Dublin 2

13th May, 1980.

12/5
Mr. D. Neligan,
Assistant Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs.

Dear David,

I enclose a revised draft of the reply to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of which the Taoiseach has approved.

Yours sincerely,

Domot Nally

Confidential

Draft reply by Minister for Foreign Affairs to letter dated 21 April from Mr. Humphrey Atkins.

May, 1980

Notes

Thank you for your letter of 21 April in response to which I would like to say how much I too appreciated meeting you here. Our talks were indeed useful and I look forward to their regular continuance.

Mr. Atkins's letter shows a defective understanding of our approach and calls for a reply.

I appreciate your raising informally the view which I expressed at our meeting that my Government should be involved in discussions of a devolved administration in Northern Ireland. In this regard I have to say that, as you know, the involvement we seek is not particularly or solely related to the process of negotiation which you are at present engaged in with the representatives of certain parties in Northern Ireland, or even to the more general question of relations between both parts of the community there. It relates also to structured discussion between our

This view was only expressed by the Minister in the context of our desire to have discussions on all three dimensions. (See below)

, particularly in the present troubled state of the world,

Governments about relations between both parts of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain. This is the wider context in which we desire to engage in talks with your Government with a view to finding a formula for permanent peace and stability.

As regards the process in which you are engaged, you are aware that it is not our policy to comment publicly upon developments, [lest we should thereby afford a pretext to any participant to withdraw, or should otherwise disrupt the process.]

You refer to the risk of extinction of the partial cooperation of the Unionist side from which your efforts have benefitted up to now, but there is perhaps a more obvious danger of withdrawal by the parties which desire implementation of what ^{we understood} ~~used~~ to be the bipartisan British objective of executive partnership. You are aware of the doubts we have, in these circumstances, of the ^{possibilities for lasting success} ~~viability~~ of the negotiation you are engaged in and of our view

We have not commented on developments in the conference. We have said we found its original basis inadequate (before the parallel conference was initiated) and we say that the conference cannot provide a conclusive settlement (see next para.)

Point out delicately that only one Unionist party is cooperating at all with Atkins.

Make point that power-sharing used to be a bipartisan British principle.

that, even if it were to lead to
an agreed result, this could not
provide a conclusive settlement.
It is in these circumstances that
we propose that the issue be lifted
to a higher plane between us and
that we should ~~consider mechanisms~~
~~for fundamental discussion of~~ all
three dimensions of the problem.

*discuss between us in a fundamental
way*

I look forward to seeing you when
our Heads of Government meet in
the near future.

Yours sincerely

cc PSM, PSS, Mr. Burke, Mr. D. Nally

Manuscript changes proposed by Mr. Nally.