

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2012/90/1057
Creation Date(s):	13 October 1982
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.

PA. S. 21539.

see Para 3.

Note: Spoke to Zaccaria. Ambassador should say a little a. possible at this stage. I / questioned about a meeting with D/FA, he should indicate that a decision should not wait till end of W. to be taken.

Matters which the Ambassador, London, might take up with the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at luncheon at the Embassy on 13 October 1982

Mr Murray - 2. Mr Keenan. 14 was known (to be) to D/FA. 17. 13.10.82. 15/10

1. The British Government's initiative in Northern Ireland

- (a) to ask the Secretary of State how he feels things are going in the Assembly election campaign and generally,
- (b) to indicate our views, which the British side already know in general.

As requested by the British Embassy in Dublin we have taken careful note of Mr Prior's statements in recent days, in particular what British officials have called the "green guarantee", that is clarifications designed to emphasise what the SDLP and other nationalist parties can get from the Assembly and to tempt them into involvement. The view in Dublin is that Mr Prior's presentations, especially when (as in the Spotlight interview) he has to address both parts of the community together, do not offer any sort of "guarantee" to nationalists. In fact they consist perforce of a restatement of his basic position of providing a framework within which the two parts of the community can try to make their own way forward (although there is no evidence that they will even try).

It is the nature of this framework that we object to. We feel that there has to be "stage-setting" - in fact, a wider stage has to be set (North/South and Anglo-Irish dimensions) - and there has to be something to tempt and draw both sides onto neutral ground. The Assembly framework reposes on total continuance of the Union, total maintenance of the "guarantee" to Unionists and an actual retreat from prescribed assignment of a role to nationalists. It is small wonder that Unionists welcome the Assembly as an opportunity to reassert their vocation to regional dominance and that nationalists boycott the institution.

B. ideas for meeting not to be made or implied

If there is an opportunity for making more fundamental points verging on the theoretical, it might be pointed out that the basic breakthrough in thinking underlying the Anglo-Irish rapprochement of 1980 was that, since the problem of Northern Ireland was insoluble in the narrow Northern-Ireland context, that context should be changed. A new approach should be attempted in the context of Anglo-Irish relations. What is particularly disappointing to us is that this new perspective has been ignored and that the British Government has once more become involved in the hopeless and frustrating search for a purely local solution.

2. Aftermath of Northern Ireland elections

- (a) British Government's view. How long does Mr Prior think the Assembly will continue to meet, given the attitude of the different parties? In the event of failure to make any progress towards the negotiation of devolved arrangements, how long will the British authorities be prepared to keep the Assembly going?

- (b) Irish Government's preoccupations. The aftermath of the election will bring various pressures to bear upon our authorities. From the SDLP and the IIP fairly detailed proposals have been made for the establishment of fora within which Nationalist elected representatives from Northern Ireland would meet together with elected representatives of the political parties in our part of Ireland, with as an alternative the possibility that they might enjoy some sort of hearing in Dail Eireann. The Government will respond to these various proposals in due course. May we take it, from recent remarks by Mr Prior, that we may also be receiving an approach from the British authorities in connection with the early initiation of an Anglo-Irish parliamentary forum? In considering the conflicting claims for Irish Government support that are likely to arise, our Government will

/...

have to have regard to its fundamental concern of preventing the collapse of constitutional nationalist politics in Northern Ireland. It is to be feared that the Assembly Election and the nature of the proposals which gave rise to it will have a profoundly demoralising effect on constitutional nationalist politicians and their supporters. Any decision taken by the Irish Government could not ignore the necessity of restoring morale to the Nationalist community and of avoiding an increase in influence and support for the men of violence in the Nationalist community.

3. Intergovernmental relations

Our position remains that we are favourable to the continuation of useful and mutually advantageous cooperation. We are glad that our discussion of such matters, both at the official and Ministerial levels, has not been inhibited by the divergence of views as between the two Governments on matters of higher policy. However, while this divergence continues in its entirety, we do not consider that meetings at higher level (Heads of Government, Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs) can usefully be considered.

4. Extradition

The Government took exception to remarks reported to have been made by Mr Prior recently on American radio in which he yet again described fugitive terrorists as having found "safe haven" in our territory. — Here the criticism is of N. & Forces for letting them out,