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**Title:** Copy letter from Donal O’Sullivan, Ambassador of Ireland to Great Britain, to HJ McCann, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, reporting a meeting with the Northern Ireland Agent Mr Jones, regarding the appointment of Brian Faulkner as Prime Minister of Northern Ireland and the composition of his government

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Strictly Confidential

April 1st 1971

Dear Secretary

My wife and I had lunch at their home yesterday with the Northern Ireland Agent and his wife. There were no other guests. Mr. Jones and I talked privately about developments in the North both before and after lunch and I found him much more oncoming than he had been on previous occasions when we discussed the subject.

He expressed himself as very pleased that Mr. Faulkner has got the top job. Both are, apparently, close friends. In Mr. Jones's view - and this he repeated many times - Mr. Faulkner will need an extraordinary amount of luck to hold the job and to bring the situation under control. He has made an admirable start by forming what is the nearest thing to a coalition Government and by his "positive and unambiguous public pronouncements". Mr. Jones gave full praise to the reaction of the Taoiseach to Mr. Faulkner's appointment and he wished me to know that this is much appreciated by the Northern Premier. If the present atmosphere can be maintained, practical co-operation between the North and the South will all the sooner become a worthwhile reality.

Mr. Jones then went on to say that it was he who prepared the brief for the meeting which Mr. Faulkner had with the present Taoiseach some years ago. He (Mr. Jones) claims to be a strong advocate of North/South co-operation on economic matters and he expects to be able to go into this question fully with Mr. Faulkner during his two day visit to London this week. Belfast will, he thinks, have to

give an early and positive reaction to the Taoiseach's offer of co-operation. The initial contacts between both sides will, in the present atmosphere, scarcely be possible at political level but he would hope that a meeting between the Taoiseach and Mr. Faulkner could take place perhaps later this year. He then went on to say that one of his reasons for wanting to see me at this stage was to sound me out on a suggestion which he would like to put to Mr. Faulkner during his present visit to London. It is that he might find an early opportunity for a private and completely informal meeting between Mr. Faulkner and myself over a drink. I said I would welcome this. Mr. Jones will let me know Mr. Faulkner's reaction.

Mr. Jones thinks that the inclusion of Mr. West in the Northern Cabinet was a wise move. It is doubtful whether West is at heart a Right-Winger in the sense that Craig and others are. West has carried a serious chip on his shoulder because of his treatment by Lord O'Neill. On the other hand, Faulkner and West have remained good friends throughout and both have the characteristic of being realists.

Mr. Faulkner can be relied upon to do everything possible to provide strong and positive Government and this for two main reasons, namely:-

- (1) he has no illusions about what London will do if he fails in his mission;
- (2) he is fully convinced that, if economic disaster is to be avoided, conditions for economic progress in the North have to be created as quickly as possible.

The enforcement of law and order and the effective implementation of the reform programme are, in Mr. Faulkner's opinion, of special importance in the context of (2). To these, Mr. Jones added his own view that the renewal and expansion of cooperation between North and South would be interpreted by both sides in the North as evidence of a return to normality there.

Mr. Jones said that perhaps the greatest hope for Mr. Faulkner's administration is the fact that the alternative to it is a takeover by Westminster. This eventuality is a matter of deep concern among the majority in the North. They are convinced that a takeover could only be a step towards reunification. Here, Mr. Jones made the comment that, as an Englishman, he himself has no strong views against eventual reunification but, if it is one day to take place, it should happen in circumstances which will not create uproar among the majority in the North.

The message which Mr. Jones wanted to leave with me can, I think, be summarised as follows:-

- (a) Mr. Faulkner is in a delicate situation and it would be unfortunate if anything were said at Government level on our side which would make his position more difficult.
- (b) We need have no misgivings about Mr. Faulkner's intentions in relation to the reform programme.
- (c) It will be a main plank in his policy to bring about as quickly as possible conditions for economic progress in the North and co-operation with us could be helpful in this

context.

Yours sincerely

DONAL O'SULLIVAN

Ambassador

H J McCann Esq  
Secretary  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
Dublin 2

P S Since I dictated this, Mr. Jones phoned to let me know that he understood from one of the people who arrived here this morning with Mr. Faulkner that a reply being given today or tomorrow to a Parliamentary Question in Stormont will indicate that officials from the North are to make contact shortly with Dublin on the question of economic co-operation. He was vague on details. He told Mr. Faulkner of our talk yesterday. Mr. Faulkner would be interested in an informal chat with me at a mutually convenient date but is reluctant to rush matters at this stage for obvious reasons. Mr. Jones was asked by Mr. Faulkner to let me know that the Taoiseach's reaction is much appreciated.

Do's.