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Title: 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 Stewart Crawford, Deputy Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, regarding the British government Green Paper on Northern Ireland.

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October 25th 1972

Personal and Confidential

Dear Secretary

This will confirm and enlarge on what I told you on the telephone yesterday afternoon following my call on Sir Stewart Crawford, Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

After indicating to Sir Stewart that my main purpose in calling on him was to have a general discussion on developments in regard to the North, I went on to say that the Taoiseach and the Government fully appreciate the difficulties with which Mr. Whitelaw is faced at this time. I said that the Government is concerned to do nothing to aggravate feelings but that it feels that the way to a peaceful political solution must be kept open. The Taoiseach has to state his position from time to time as there could be no question of leaving the stage to those who advocate extreme views. Sir Stewart said that he fully appreciated the position of my Government that it was important that the voice of those favouring moderation should be heard and that he doubted if any on his side could find much fault with recent pronouncements from Dublin.

We then went on to talk about the Green Paper. Sir Stewart told me that the paper will be published on Monday next. I asked if there were any arrangements to supply advance copies to Dublin and said that this would, I felt, be helpful as the Taoiseach and Ministers were likely to be under heavy pressure for comment as soon as the Green Paper was released. Sir Stewart said he would do his utmost to make sure that an advance copy

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of the Green Paper was given to the Taoiseach by the weekend. He also promised to make a copy available to me at the same time.

As you know Mr. Merlyn Rees, M.P. will be travelling to Dublin on Tuesday next to address one of the societies of Trinity College that evening. He is to make a call on the Taoiseach at 4 p.m. on Tuesday. It seemed to me important that the Taoiseach should have an opportunity to study the Green Paper before he sees Mr. Rees.

Sir Stewart Crawford told me that the Green Paper will *NOT* foreclose any reasonable options. The document, he told me, is likely to run to about fifty pages of print and in so far as he could recall it will contain:-

- (i) Historical background;
- (ii) A statement of the problem;
- (iii) A summary of the various proposals which have been made for a solution;
- (iv) A discussion of possible solutions.

The Green Paper will be merely a basis for discussion. It will contain no hard and fast recommendations as to the form which the solution might take. At the same time it will be possible to deduce from the text which of the suggested solutions would, or would not, be likely to be acceptable to Westminster.

I spoke at some length about our concern at the speech made in London on the 19th October by Mr. Craig. I also brought up the question of the reported accommodation reached last week between the British army and the UDA. These developments, I stressed, were bound to add considerably to the fears of the minority side. Sir Stewart confined himself to saying that London is also deeply concerned about the line now being advocated by Mr. Craig.

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Craig's views are not without a good deal of support in the North and this creates a very frightening situation. It is all the more important in the circumstances that positive moves towards a political solution should be speeded up in order to allay misgivings on the majority side that they may be sold down the drain and to give moderate opinion in the North the opportunity of making its voice heard.

I stressed particularly our concern about the recent bombing incidents at Carrigans and Clones, responsibility for which had been claimed by the UDA.

I then went on to stress the very firm view of the Taoiseach that quadrupartite talks provide the key to peaceful political development. Sir Stewart was quite specific in his reaction on this point. While indicating that he had no information as to what transpired at the meeting in Paris between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister, he told me that the view at official level is that quadrupartite talks ~~will~~ *would* not be helpful in the present climate. He went further and said that it is the official view here that it would be a good thing if Ministers in Dublin would avoid repeating their call for quadrupartite talks. I recalled to Sir Stewart that British policy in relation to Ireland for almost a century has been bedevilled by a fear of offending the Protestant population. His reaction to the suggestion of quadrupartite talks seemed to me to be a confirmation that this policy has not changed. The problem of the North is one which affects the whole of Ireland and, whatever solution is reached, the Republic will have to be relied upon heavily to ensure that it works. His reaction to this was that we will be free to offer any comments and suggestions which we want following the issue of the Green Paper and

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these will certainly be most welcome. He again repeated that it is the official view that contact between Dublin and London should be through diplomatic channels with occasional ad hoc meetings at ministerial level.

On the question of the plebiscite he was equally firm. Mr. Whitelaw is under the strongest pressure to go ahead with the arrangements for it. It is their firm intention to proceed quickly with the making of these arrangements.

I am seeking an appointment to call on Mr. Whitelaw in the next few days with a view to going over much the same ground that I covered with Sir Stewart Crawford. I had hoped to meet Mr. Whitelaw at the Banquet given by the Queen last night at Windsor Castle for the German President but he was not present. I met the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary briefly at the function but our conversation did not touch on the Northern question. I am having Mr. Wilson to lunch on Wednesday next as I feel that a talk with him at this stage would be useful.

Yours sincerely

DONAL O'SULLIVAN

~~Donal O'Sullivan~~
Ambassador

Hugh J McCann Esq
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