

*Pol 2*



BRITISH EMBASSY,  
DUBLIN.

*105/372*  
15 JUL 1991  
H.M.O. LONDON

J A Chilcot Esq CB  
Northern Ireland Office  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1

11 July 1991

*cc to Mr [unclear] 9/8*  
~~cc to Mr [unclear]~~  
1 cc ps / Mr [unclear]  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Ashton  
Mr Jeverell  
Mr J S [unclear]  
Mr Cooke  
Mr McNeill  
*2 full Mr 18/7*

*Dear John,*

*36/83*

**POLITICAL TALKS ON NORTHERN IRELAND: VIEWS OF JOHN HUME**

You will wish to see John Hume's assessment of the position at the end of the talks as recounted by Ruairi Quinn, Deputy Leader of the Irish Labour Party, to Jeremy Thorp.

Particularly interesting is Hume's report of the Taoiseach's assessment of the views of the Prime Minister and Mr Brooke.

I am copying this letter only to Nigel Broomfield.

*Yours etc,*

Nicholas Fenn

cc: N H R A Broomfield Esq CMG, FCO



From: J W Thorp  
Date: 12 July 1991

Mr Fergusson  
HMA

**CONVERSATION WITH RUAIRI QUINN, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, ON 10 JULY: NORTHERN IRELAND ASPECTS**

1. When I called on Quinn to discuss internal political matters (recorded separately) he began by discussing his talk with John Hume in Dublin on 4 July. Hume had debriefed the Taoiseach that morning on the ending of talks between the parties on political developments, and subsequently called on Quinn (as Dick Spring was unavailable) and on Fine Gael. Hume's views, as described to me by Quinn, may be of interest:

- (a) According to Quinn, Hume did not seem "distraught" at the ending of the talks, but he did not believe that the process would end with the Secretary of State's statement on 3 July.
- (b) Hume said that the positions of the British and Irish Governments were as one; and that Mr Haughey had formed a very favourable view of the Prime Minister's attitude to the Irish Government's position, to the point that Mr Major had, according to Haughey, accepted the logic of the Irish position and not that of the Unionists. The Dublin/London "axis" according to Hume but probably reflecting Mr Haughey's view, was working very well.
- (c) Hume had said that the talks had exposed British-based officials, politicians and media to a close-up view of the Unionists in negotiations, and this had come as a shock to them. He believed that this would be of advantage to the SDLP and Irish Government.
- (d) Mr Haughey had, unusually, paid tribute to Dick Spring for his remarks in the Dail on 3 July. According to Quinn these had been circulated to Irish Embassies overseas (presumably as evidence of all-party support for the Irish Government's position).
- (e) Looking further ahead, Hume thought that Mr Brooke's influence on Mr Major was not very strong, and that one reason why he had shown so much patience in the talks process was that they constituted his own political lifeline.
- (f) Hume believed that the Unionists would hold out as long as possible against substantive talks in the hope that a British election would put them in a position where they could exercise a greater influence over the British Government.
- (g) Hume had no great expectations arising from a Labour victory, because the Labour Party could not deliver any agreement that might be reached.

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL



2. Quinn's own view was that the position of the British and Irish Governments were so close that we were putting pressure on the Northern Ireland parties to sort out the problem for themselves. The fact that there was also a multi-party approach to the talks process both in the UK and the Republic also helped because it ensured that the talks did not become an internal political football.

3. In my own remarks I confined myself to saying that the British approach was basically one of steady as she goes, and that efforts to begin the talks process again would be resumed after the holidays (Quinn indicated full assent). On the assessment of Mr Major's attitudes above, I counselled caution; the Unionists could not be bombed or bullied into submission. Quinn responded that this would not be the first time that Mr Haughey had formed an exaggerated view of reality.

JW

J.W. Thorp