

THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES



Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998 Themed Collection

What do the documents reveal about its significance?

Key Stage 4 and 5 | Postwar 1945 - present
Themed Collection

Introduction

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (BGFA) of 10 April 1998, is the most significant attempt, since partition in Ireland, to address division in Northern Ireland.

It was the third agreement between the United Kingdom and Ireland (following the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 and the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985) focused on securing a solution to divisions and an end to the campaign of violence in Northern Ireland and, at times, across the two countries, particularly since 1969, although there had been occasional violent campaigns since the Fenian bombing campaign in the UK in the nineteenth century. The violence in Northern Ireland had endured for centuries involving the native Irish and descendants of British colonists who had arrived with the Plantation in the seventeenth century, thus as long in Ireland as Europeans in North America.

The Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 was negotiated between the UK and Irish governments as well as the then government in Northern Ireland and the main opposition party. It failed to secure broad support from the unionist community and collapsed the following year in 1974.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 was between the two governments alone. It endured until the Belfast Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and secured the right of the Irish government to have an input on issues in Northern Ireland, a right underpinned by international law through the registration of the Agreement with the United Nations.

The BGFA differed in a number of important respects from the earlier agreements, not least its far-reaching nature, seeking to address all the dimensions of division.

Firstly, in terms of inclusion, it was close to comprehensive. The two governments, as well as all political parties bar one, the Democratic Unionist Party, were involved. That inclusivity meant that, for the first time, subject to strict conditions on non-violence and eventually on putting all weapons beyond use, representatives of paramilitary groups, which had been engaged in violent campaigns, were involved in the negotiations.

The second way in which the BGFA differed from earlier agreements was in external arbitration, the appointment of an experienced outsider, United States Senator George Mitchell, as the Chair of the talks. His presence, as a respected outsider with no prior engagement on Ireland, together with his wide experience as a senior member of the US Senate (Majority Leader 1989-1995), helped keep the focus on the issues.

The BGFA, as mentioned, embraced a wide agenda, dealing with issues like sovereignty, discrimination, the disbandment and disarmament of paramilitary groups, reform of justice and policing, self-government in the province, the release of prisoners. It established two institutions in Northern Ireland – the Assembly and the Executive – and three North-South institutions – North-South Ministerial Council, the North-South Inter-Parliamentary Association and the North-South Consultative Forum. Three institutions were set up to facilitate interaction between the UK and Irish governments – British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body. Thus, by creating this broad

Introduction

system of interaction, the Agreement provided institutional mechanisms for cooperation on a broad level and for dealing with divisive issues as they arise.

Importantly, the BGFA addressed the consent principle in a fundamental way.

Through two referendums on the 22 May, 1998, held simultaneously in both Ireland and Northern Ireland – thus, island-wide – it secured agreement to there being no change in the sovereign status of Northern Ireland until and unless a majority there so voted. But, equally and no less importantly, by gaining a significant majority for the Agreement in Northern Ireland (70%), implicitly it secured, for the first time since partition, the consent of a significant nationalist minority to being part of Northern Ireland. Moreover, because of the island-wide referendums, the BGFA has a huge majority mandate of support from the people of Ireland.

This project, From Conflict to Peace, aims to acquaint students at secondary school level (GCSE and A level) with the BGFA, to demonstrate the enormous benefits of the Agreement to society in Northern Ireland and to sensitise them to the fact that their generation is one of the first to go through school and live in peace, with no intrusive security industry impinging on their daily lives, and, importantly, without ever hearing the sound of a gunshot or an explosion.

Moreover, the Agreement has created the drivers which offer the prospect over time of a blurring of communal and traditional identity and a greater degree of finding common social cause across communities. Equally, the Agreement's emphasis on parity of esteem and fair employment, as well as its reforms in law enforcement, removes the impulse to see challenges in communal, sectarian terms and shifts the focus to the same drivers as in a settled, unified community.

Obviously, there is no guarantee that the BGFA will hold and not be threatened by the actions of the minority still committed to violence. Yet, as demonstrated by this project, there is a dramatic and popular contrast in society post-BGFA and the divided society which preceded it.

The historically strong popular mandate given to the Agreement in 1998 needs bolstering, not least through projects like From Conflict to Peace which remind the generations which follow of the division which went before and of the huge benefits of an Agreement involving all the main elements of society. The current generation of young people have the opportunity to bed down the Agreement further and continue the process of helping social division to wither.

Frank Sheridan is a retired Irish Government Diplomat who participated in the Peace Process

Teacher's Notes

This themed collection includes all the original documents used to create The National Archives resources for use in secondary level school assemblies to mark the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement which ended the conflict in Northern Ireland.

In addition, our short video gives an overview of the conflict and the peace process that brought it to an end, what the Agreement did and its results. These resources can be used to build knowledge about the Agreement and support student discussion about how it successfully brought an end to the violence and brought in a new era of peace in Northern Ireland.

This themed collection, however, allows teachers to create their own differentiated resources.

- Students can also be encouraged to do their own research within an archival collection for their own individual projects and enquiries.
- Using the themed collection, students could 'curate' their own 'exhibition' of the most significant sources on the topic.
- Students could also use the documents to substantiate or dispute points made in the introduction to the collection.
- The collection allows students to work independently with a group of sources or source type, ranging from documents from the Prime Minister's Office, Secretary of State or Northern Ireland, press releases, newspapers and so on.

Working with original documents should offer students a chance to develop their powers of evaluation and analysis and support their course work. Please note, the transcripts of the resources retain any typographical errors included in the original documents.

Teacher's Notes

Possible questions/themes to explore using the documents collection:

- What evidence is there that the talks are going well or that an agreement is imminent?
- Do the documents reveal challenges or barriers to agreement in April 1998?
- Which sources reflect key points in the journey towards a peace agreement?
- Are there documents which suggest how the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement achieved?
- How do the documents explore the part played by different individuals in the peace process.
- Students could research the collection to argue if there was one individual or a group.
- Which documents infer the significance of the Agreement?
- What was the significance of the Downing Street Declaration?

Once students are familiar with the collection it would be worth discussing as a group:

- How historians use documents to develop a line of argument and formulate their own interpretations.
- Why does this collection contain documents from The National Archives, The Irish Archives, and the Public Record office for Northern Ireland?

Source 1: Foreign Office memo to Northern Ireland Office

Catalogue Ref: FCO 87/3596

(88)
FILE COPY

RESTRICTED

*Briefing passed to MLD
Mr Austin
Mr Cooke is content.
This can go forward
10/12*

FROM: GRAHAM ARCHER
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND DEPARTMENT

DATE: 9 DECEMBER 1992

CC: Mr Thomas
Mr Bell
Mr Brooker

Mr D A Cooke
TPU, NIO - B

BRIEF FOR PRIME MINISTERS TELEPHONE CONVERSATION
WITH PRESIDENT ELECT CLINTON

1. We have been asked for a note by tomorrow morning to include in a short brief.

2. Are you content with the following:

A F NORTHERN IRELAND

President-elect Clinton's closest foreign policy advisers have told our Ambassador that we should not take too seriously statements made by him to Irish-American audiences during the election campaign. These included comment that a US envoy could be a catalyst for peace, possible support for the MacBride principles that impose conditions on investment in Northern Ireland, a visa for Gerry Adams, and the "wanton use of lethal force".

We see no need for the Prime Minister to enter into any detail on Northern Ireland with Governor Clinton. But the Prime Minister may wish to play up our concern in a low key on the following lines:-

- we hope to restart the Northern Ireland Talks process shortly;
- we place great importance on this process. It needs careful handling and we shall need continuing American support for it. I look forward to having a fuller word about this when we meet.

J B

G R ARCHER

G R ARCHER

ID 3706

RESTRICTED

Transcript Source 1

Date: 09.12.1992

Memo from Graham Archer a British official in the Foreign Office, Republic of Ireland Department, to D.A. Cooke an official in the Northern Ireland Office, Catalogue ref: FCO 87/3596

\From: Graham Archer. Republic of Ireland Department

Date: 9 December 1992

CC: Mr Thomas, Mr Bell, Mr Brooker

Mr D A Cooke

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Brief for Prime Ministers telephone conversation with President Elect Clinton

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- We place great importance on this process. It needs careful handling and we shall need continuing American support for it. I look forward to having a fuller word about this when we meet.

G R Archer

Source 2: 'The Sundays News' reports in Irish Republic

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/11527

The Sunday Press

page

Why John Hume is right to enter into talks with Gerry Adams

There has been considerable debate — some of it almost of hysterical proportions — concerning the decision of the leader of the SDLP, John Hume, to talk with the President of Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams. What seems to have enraged some politicians and commentators is their decision to issue a joint-statement after it was accidentally leaked that their discussions were taking place.

In Dublin there seems to be some puzzlement about why Mr Hume did not inform them beforehand that he was about to enter these discussions, but that is probably because the talks were intended to be confidential in order to give the participants the chance to make progress out of the glare of publicity.

It seems incredible that after 23 years of violence in the North an attempt by

one of our most respected constitutional politicians, John Hume, to achieve peace should become wrapped up in petty party pointscoring and, instead of being encouraged to help break the logjam, he should be vilified.

Mr Hume does not have all the answers to the problems of Northern Ireland; he is not the only speaker for the Nationalist people of the North. But he does have answers and he does speak for a sizeable section of that Nationalist community.

Above all he speaks the searing truth when he says that this litany of carnage, despair, murder, destruction and human tragedy on a vast scale has got to be

stopped. And he is attempting to stop it.

John Hume must know there are risks involved in this strategy, but the possibility of success presents such a huge prize it is, in our view, worth taking the risks. If John Hume can get across to the Sinn Fein-IRA axis the truths that there is a better way, that 23 years of violence has not worked and that the political path is the one to tread, then he will have achieved something of historic proportions.

Hume says that if he fails then all he will have lost is his time. It is not as simple as that, however, and there are fears that his venture will damage

constitutional nationalism as well as the prospects of a successful renewal of the talks in the North. Even allowing for those misgivings Hume is right to talk to Adams if he feels he has a chance of success.

The Irish and British Governments are making commendable efforts to restart the talks process but, as Douglas Hurd said in Dublin on Friday, it is a slow process. In the meantime lives are being lost daily. It is in that context that Hume has undertaken his discussions with Adams. The waiting game means a prolonged campaign of violence, with more deaths and heartache.

If there is pressure on Hume to deliver something from the talks then there is equal pressure on Adams. If his objective is solely to legitimise the Republican movement by being seen to be in dialogue with the leader of constitutional nationalism in the North then he is engaged in a hypocritical exercise.

Adams, like a number of his Sinn Fein colleagues, must know the campaign of the gun and the bomb has, to put it mildly, not borne fruit. It is time for a change and they surely realise there is another way. How to bring about that other way is the nub of the discussions between him and the SDLP leader and the talks are therefore not only worthwhile but probably an essential part of the process which must be gone through if we are to achieve peace.

Transcript Source 2

Date: 09.05.1993

A newspaper cutting contained in a UK government file. The article was published in May 1993 in The Sunday News, a newspaper in the Irish Republic. Catalogue ref: CJ 4/11527

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Source 3: Peace Train Organisation

Catalogue Ref: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland: CENT-1-20-33A_1993-nd

3.0 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION

The Peace Train Organisation came into being in 1989. The original idea is attributed to Pronsais De Rossa, a Workers Party T.D. in Dail Eireann, who together with other interested individuals decided to form a pressure group to oppose the ongoing bombing campaign against the Dublin /Belfast rail link. The idea was taken up by like minded individuals in Northern Ireland, initially by Chris and Michael McGimpsey, who formed a Northern contingent to co-operate with the group in Dublin. Eventually support committees were established in both London and Glasgow.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. CCRU should extend funding for a further year, rather than for three years, to allow time for the Peace Train to demonstrate that they have put into effect a clear development strategy. Such a strategy is not yet evident but there are clear signs that the need for it has been recognised and that attempts are under way to formulate one.

2. CCRU should reinforce to PTO as a condition of any further funding the types of output it considers appropriate for projects which it funds.

3. CCRU should give considered assessment to the value which it would place on any initiative which brings politicians from across the political divide in Northern Ireland to work together for a common purpose. This does not have a high correlation with CCRU objectives as specified and may be within the remit of another agency.

4. Peace train should be encouraged to give precedence to an initiative highlighting Loyalist paramilitary violence. To date its campaign has been almost exclusively directed at republican violence. Such a display would almost certainly make it clear that the organisation was unequivocal in its operation and this would be likely to broaden it's appeal and acceptability.

Transcript Source 3

Date: 11.05.1993

A report on the Peace Train Organisation (PTO) produced in May 1993. The report was commissioned by the Central Community Relations Unit, part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Public Record Office of Northern Ireland: CENT-1-20-33A_1993-nd

3.0 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION

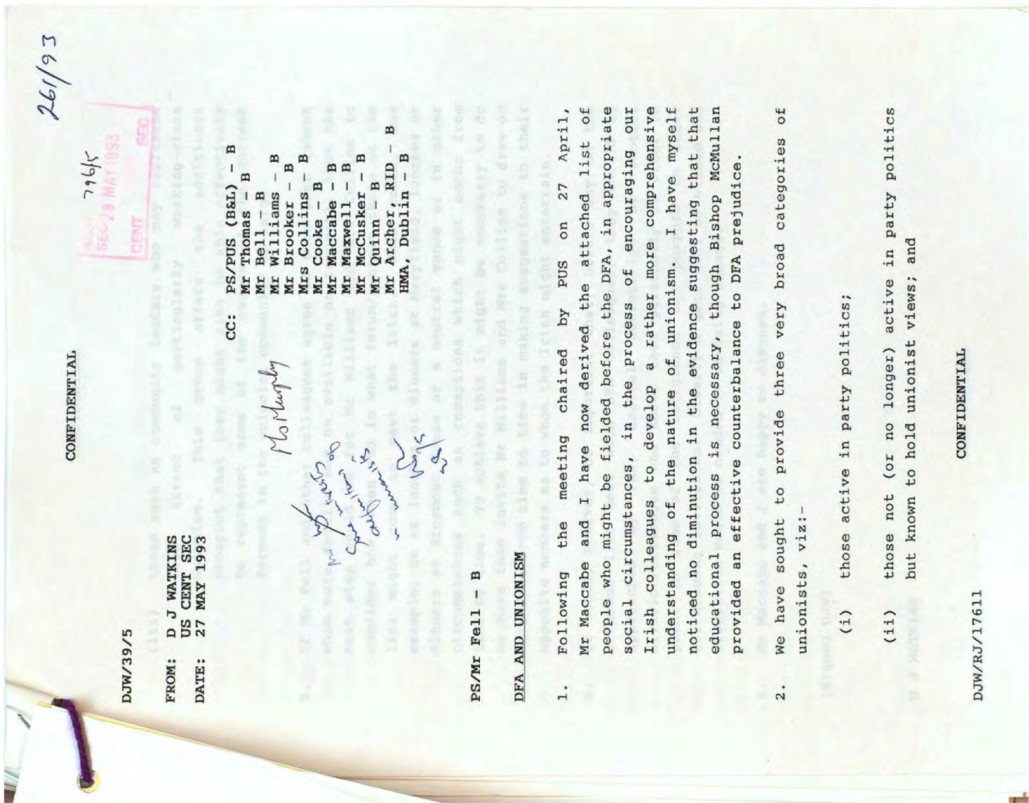
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Source 4: Meeting of Unionists and Irish Government Department of Affairs

Catalogue Ref: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland: CENT/1/20/33A_1993-05-27



Transcript Source 4

Date: 27.05.1993

An internal memorandum produced by an official in the Northern Ireland Civil Service in May 1993. It is reporting on a plan to arrange a meeting between representatives of Unionism in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government's Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Public Record Office of Northern Ireland: CENT/1/20/33A_1993-05-27

CONFIDENTIAL

DJW/39/5 FROM: DJ WATKINS US CENT SEC

DATE: 27 MAY 1993

CC: PS/PUS (B&L) – B Mr Thomas – B Mr Bell – B Mr Williams – B Mr Brooker – B Mrs Collins – B Mr Cooke – B Mr Maccabe – B Mr Maxwell – B Mr Mccusker – B Mr Quinn – B Mr Archer, RID – B HMA, Dublin – B

PS/Mr Fell – B

DFA AND UNIONISM

1. Following the meeting chaired by PUS on 27 April, Mr Maccabe and I have now derived the attached list of people who might be fielded before the DFA, in appropriate social circumstances, in the process of encouraging our Irish colleagues to develop a rather more comprehensive understanding of the nature of unionism. I have myself noticed no diminution in the evidence suggesting that that educational process is necessary, though Bishop McMullan provided an effective counterbalance to DFA prejudice.

2. We have sought to provide three very broad categories of unionists, viz:-

(i) those active in party politics;

(ii) those not (or no longer) active in party politics but known to hold unionist views; and

(iii) those such as community leaders who may represent that strand of particularly working-class unionism. This group offers the additional prospect that they might also be able effectively to represent some of the causes of the current ferment in the unionist community at large.

DFA AND UNIONISM

"Unionists" who are active in Party Politics

Jeffrey Donaldson. Robert Coulter. Raymond Ferguson. Ian Paisley (Junior). Gregory Campbell. Roy Bradford. Liz Seawright. Sean Neeson. Seamus Close. Ian Adamson. Hugh Smyth. Drew Nelson

Non – Political Unionists

AT Q Stewart. Clifford Smith. Lord Cooke. Lord Blease. Alisdair McLaughlin. Godfrey Brown. Paul Hewitt. Peter McLachlan. Rae Davey. Basil Glass. Lady Faulkner. William Fitch. Paul Bew. Edna Longley. James Hawthorne. Peter Smith QC. Robin Bailie. Noel Stewart. Sir A Campbell. Anthony Hart. John Martin. Robert McCartney. Addie Morrow. John Morrow. Sir D Lorimer.

Community Leaders

Jackie Redpath. Billy Hutchinson. Sammy Douglas. Monica Barrett (Quaker). Jackie Hewitt. Jack Hanvey. Rev Jim Rea. Eddie Callaghan.

Source 5: Letter from UK to Irish Taoiseach

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/10560



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 November 1993

Handwritten: Privately Confidential

Dear Albert,

It was good to talk to you last Saturday. I am sorry to have intruded on your weekend off. I hope that you and Kathleen were able to get some relaxation during your trip. If I may say so, I thought your interview with David Frost went very well.

Making no bones about it, we have had an extremely difficult and depressing week. I need not labour the reasons why. I had allowed myself to feel a little optimistic after my meeting with Robin Eames on 18 November. But I am afraid that the following day's leak and the Hume/Adams statement on Saturday last have had precisely the effect I feared when we spoke on the phone.

I have spent all week trying to repair the damage through a series of meetings and public statements. I fear that I have had only limited success. In the current political atmosphere, there is clearly no hope of securing even tacit acceptance by the Unionist mainstream of a Joint Declaration on the lines of your draft. The text would be seen as deriving from Hume/Adams, and thus would assumed to be the product of negotiation with Sinn Fein. This is an impression which successive statements from Hume and Adams have done nothing to dispel. As we have agreed all along, association with Hume/Adams is the kiss of death for any text intended to secure acceptance on both sides of the Community.

Transcript Source 5

Date: 25.11.1993

A letter from the UK Prime Minister to the Taoiseach November 1993, Catalogue ref: CJ 4/10560

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA
The Prime Minister
25 November 1993
Strictly Confidential

Dear Albert

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Source 6: Meeting UK Prime Minister and Taoiseach

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/10560

SECRET AND PERSONAL

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TÊTE-À-TÊTE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE TAOISEACH, DUBLIN CASTLE, 3 DECEMBER 1993

Mansergh

Michael Mansergh (Special Adviser to the Taoiseach) and I joined the tête-à-tête between the two Prime Ministers from 1150 until about 1300.

The Taoiseach agreed with the Prime Minister that the common objectives of the two governments were to promote a cessation of violence and a lasting political settlement. He also agreed that, to achieve them, it was necessary to carry both sides of the community in Northern Ireland, and opinion within the government, parliament and public in the UK and Ireland.

Recent events had not helped this work. The Irish Government had felt let down on learning of exchanges between HMG and PIRA, and wondered whether it was caught in a Dutch auction. The Prime Minister said there had been no Dutch auction. HMG's exchanges with PIRA had been limited in nature and consistent with our public position. The confidential nature of these

exchanges had made it impossible for the Prime Minister to discuss them with the Irish Government.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the briefing of the press by the Irish Government had been most unhelpful, and had made success much harder to achieve. The Irish had failed to acknowledge the advances and risks taken by HMG, and had made damaging remarks about self-determination, about the British draft statement, and about an alleged deal with the UUP. The Irish had also impeded the talks process by failing to produce the paper requested in September. The leak of a draft of that paper to the Irish Press had caused uproar in the North, by giving the impression that the Irish had a hidden agenda.

Transcript Source 6

Date: 03.12.1993

Record of a meeting between the UK Prime Minister and the Irish Taoiseach December 1993,
Catalogue ref: CJ 4/10560

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA
The Prime Minister
25 November 1993
Strictly Confidential

SECRET AND PERSONAL

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TÊTE-À-TÊTE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND
THE TAOISEACH, DUBLIN CASTLE, 3 DECEMBER 1993

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The Taoiseach agreed with the Prime Minister that the common objectives of the two governments were to promote a cessation of violence and a lasting political settlement. He also agreed that, to achieve them, it was necessary to carry both sides of the community in Northern Ireland, and opinion within the government, parliament and public in the UK and Ireland.

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach had been working towards these objectives since their first meeting in Downing Street soon after the Taoiseach took office – and long before people had heard of the Hume/Adams dialogue. Since June 1993, they had been working on a draft Joint Declaration originally put forward by the Taoiseach, but since amended towards a more balanced document.

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Source 7: Civil service briefing notes Downing Street Declaration 1993

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/10562

SECRET AND PERSONAL

DRAFT LETTER FROM RODERIC LYNE TO:
Private Secretaries to Members of the Cabinet

ANGLO-IRISH JOINT DECLARATION INITIATIVE

The Prime Minister reported to Cabinet last week that negotiations with the Irish Government on a Joint Declaration were close to completion.

2. The Prime Minister and Taoiseach will meet again in London [today/tomorrow] when the Joint Declaration will be made. (The text, which may be subject to some minor last minute adjustment, is attached.)

3. The background to the making of the Joint Declaration is a little complex. The Irish Government, and the Taoiseach in particular, have come to the view, based to some extent on contacts with the Provisional Movement, that a significant component of the organisation is looking for a way of bringing the "armed struggle" to an end. This is more than a hope, but less than a firm prediction. The Joint Declaration was conceived as a way of providing cover to enable the IRA to bring its campaign to an end, and to commit itself wholly to political and democratic methods, without acknowledging abject surrender. At the same time, and in parallel, Mr John Hume has been conducting an intermittent dialogue with the Provisional Movement, and in particular with Mr Gerry Adams, with the same objective. There have been many drafts of the Joint Declaration and the parentage of different elements in it is obscure, and may subsequently be contested.

4. Until very recently the position of the British Government,

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Transcript Source 7

Date: 14.12.1993

Briefing notes sent to senior civil servants explaining the proposed Downing Street Declaration December 1993, Catalogue ref: CJ 4/10562

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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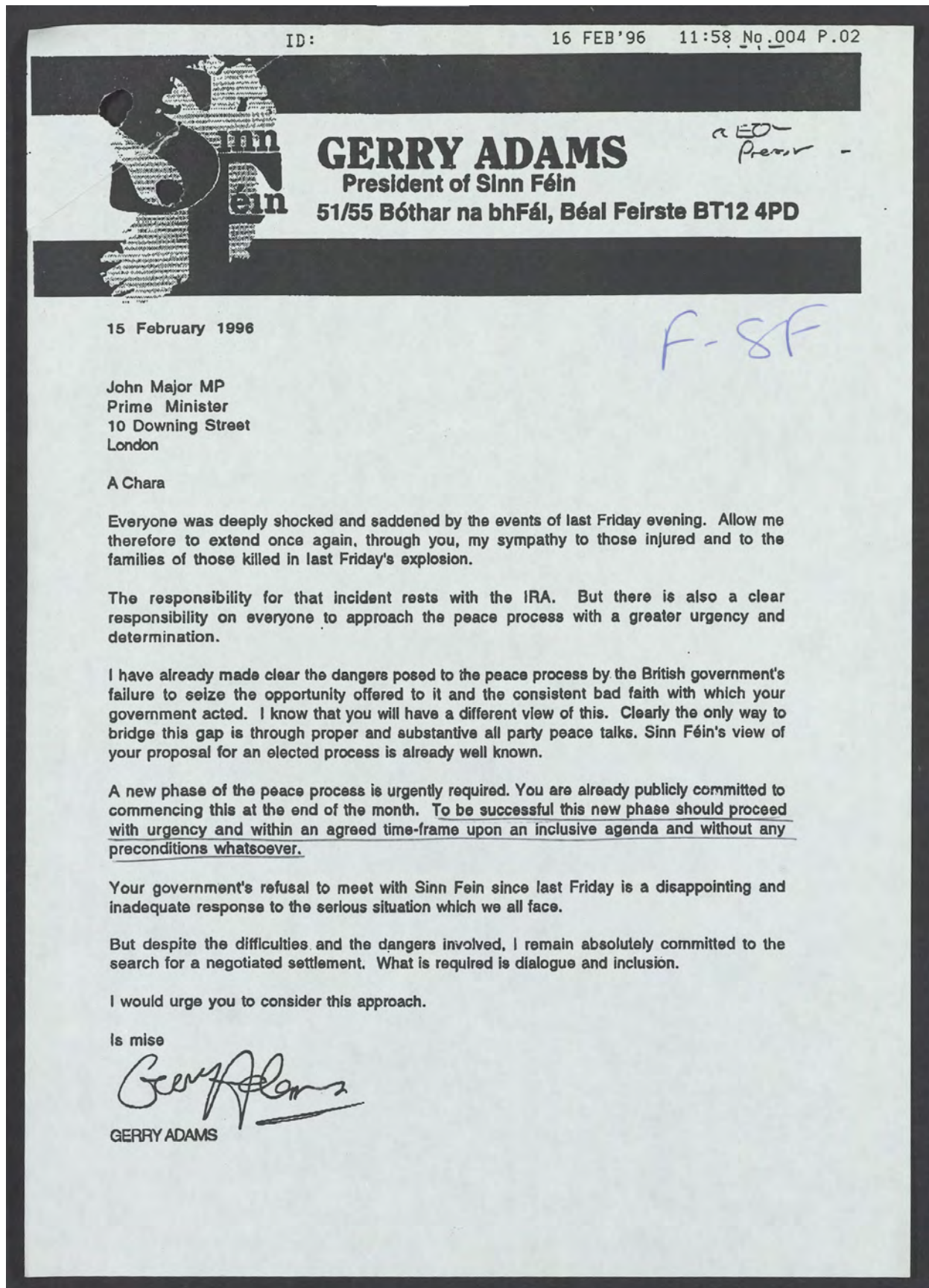
3. The background to the making of the Joint Declaration is a little complex. The Irish Government, and the Taoiseach in particular, have come to the view, based to some extent on contacts with the Provisional Movement, that a significant component of the organisation is looking for a way of bringing the "armed struggle" to an end. This is more than a hope, but less than a firm prediction. The Joint Declaration was conceived as a way of providing cover to enable the IRA to bring its campaign to an end, and to commit itself wholly to political and democratic methods, without

acknowledging abject surrender. At the same time, and in parallel, Mr John Hume has been conducting an intermittent dialogue with the Provisional Movement, and in particular with Mr Gerry Adams, with the same objective. There have been many drafts of the Joint Declaration and the parentage of different elements in it is obscure, and may subsequently be contested.

4. Until very recently the position of the British Government

Source 8: Letter from Gerry Adams to P.M. John Major

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/12375



Transcript Source 8

Date: 15.02.1996

A letter from Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin, to John Major, the UK Prime Minister, 15 February 1996, Catalogue ref: CJ 4/12375

GERRY ADAMS

President of Sinn Féin

51/55 Bóthar na bhFál, Béal Feirste BT12 4PD

15 February 1996

John Major MP

Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

London

A Chara

Everyone was deeply shocked and saddened by the events of last Friday evening. Allow me therefore to extend once again, through you, my sympathy to those injured and to the families of those killed in last Friday's explosion.

The responsibility for that incident rests with the IRA. But there is also a clear responsibility on everyone to approach the peace process with a greater urgency and determination.

I have already made clear the dangers posed to the peace process by the British government's failure to seize the opportunity offered to it and the consistent bad faith with which your government acted. I know that you will have a different view of this. Clearly the only way to bridge this gap is through proper and substantive all party peace talks. Sinn Féin's view of your proposal for an elected process is already well known.

A new phase of the peace process is urgently required. You are already publicly committed to commencing this at the end of the month. To be successful this new phase should proceed with urgency and within an agreed time-frame upon an inclusive agenda and without any preconditions whatsoever.

Your government's refusal to meet with Sinn Féin since last Friday is a disappointing and inadequate response to the serious situation which we all face.

But despite the difficulties and the danger involved, I remain absolutely committed to the search for a negotiated settlement. What is required is dialogue and inclusion.

I would urge you to consider this approach.

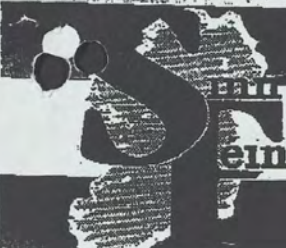
Is mise

GERRY ADAMS

Source 9: Sinn Féin letter to Secretary of State

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/12383

06/06 '96 16:48 002



Sinn Féin Ard Oifig

6 June 1996

RECEIVED PM
437/57/96
07 JUN 1996
PRIME OFFICE

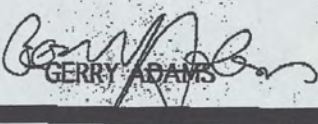
Sir Patrick Mayhew
Secretary of State
Northern Ireland Office
Whitehall
London

I understand from the media that invitations have been sent to party leaders to nominate their negotiating teams. Sinn Féin have not received such an invitation. I want to protest in the strongest possible terms at your discriminatory approach. Those who vote for our party gave us a negotiating mandate which you should respect and accept. I am therefore sending you the names of our negotiating team.

GERRY ADAMS
MARTIN McGUINNESS
GERRY KELLY
LUCILITA BHREATNACH
PAT DOHERTY
ANNE (DODIE) McGUINNESS

Martin McGuinness is our chief negotiator and in my absence he will lead the Sinn Féin negotiating panel. Note also that Siobhan O'Hanlon has been appointed by us to head up our secretariat and she can be contacted in the usual manner.

Is mise



GERRY ADAMS

44 Cearnóg Pharnell, Baile Átha Cliath 1, Éire. Fón: 8726100/8726932 Fax: 8733441

Transcript Source 9

Date: 06.06.1996

A letter from Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Féin, to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (a UK government minister), 6 June, 1996, Catalogue ref: CJ 4/12383

Sinn Féin Ard Oifig
6 June 1996
Sir Patrick Mayhew
Secretary of State
Northern Ireland Office
Whitehall
London

I understand from the media that invitations have been sent to party leaders to nominate their negotiating teams. Sinn Fein have not received such an invitation. I want to protest in the strongest possible terms at your discriminatory approach. Those who vote for our party gave us a negotiating mandate which you should respect and accept. I am therefore sending you the names of our negotiating team.

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Martin McGuinness is our chief negotiator and in my absence he will lead the Sinn Fein negotiating panel. Note also that Siobhan O'Hanlon has been appointed by us to head up our secretariat and she can be contacted in the usual manner.

Is mise

GERRY ADAMS

Source 10: Stormont peace talks June 1996

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/12228

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: INT/3

RECORD OF PLENARY SESSION, CASTLE BUILDINGS, 12 JUNE

Independent Chairmen (after adjournment)

Senator Mitchell
General de Chastelain
Mr Holkeri

<u>British Government Team</u>	<u>Irish Government Team</u>
Secretary of State Michael Ancram Sir David Fell	Tanaiste Mrs Owen Mr de Rossa
<u>Alliance Party</u>	<u>Labour</u>
Dr Alderdice Mr Close Mr Neeson	Malachi Curran
<u>NI Women's Coalition</u>	<u>PUP</u>
Ms McWilliams Ms Sagar	Mr Smyth Mr Ervine
<u>SDLP</u>	<u>UDF</u>
Mr Hume Mr Mallon Mr McGrady	Mr McMichael Mr White
<u>UDUP</u> (for part of meeting)	<u>UK Unionist</u> (for part of meeting)
Dr Paisley Mr Robinson Rev McCrea	Mr McCartney Dr O'Brien Mr Wilson
<u>UUP</u>	
Mr Trimble Mr Taylor Mr Empey	

1. The meeting began at 12.20 am.

POLDEVT/137

CONFIDENTIAL

5. When other delegates had arrived, the Secretary of State opened the meeting. The day had seen a long and useful period of deliberation, which had led the two Governments to put forward a paper which they believed offered a way forward [A possible approach to resolving procedural difficulties, 00.01am draft, annexed at A]. On the basis of this, in particular paragraph 4.1, he invited Senator Mitchell to take over, following a five minute adjournment. Dr Paisley shouted 'No, no, no'; and the rest of his delegation, and the UKUP's, left, with disparaging comments about 'British democracy'; Mr Wilson (UKUP) moved to take over one of the Independent Chairmen's chairs.

6. As proceedings were about to resume after the adjournment, Dr Paisley addressed Senator Mitchell. He said he did not accept him in the chair: his name had not been put to the meeting, and he objected in the strongest manner to the intrusion. He repeated his points about undertakings that proposals put forward would have to be to the satisfaction of participants, undertakings which had not been met. The Secretary of State had not given an opportunity to discuss it. His lackey had seen to it that he had not visited the DUP room. [I was the lackey who had visited delegations to tell them a paper, then a meeting, were imminent, if that is what was referred to: there was no-one in the DUP office, and Dr Paisley was already in the Private Office].

7. Dr Paisley then left the room, shouting that he did not wish to sit with a member of the Irish Government who threatened that there would be bodies in the street, a remark ascribed to the 'man with the beard' [presumably Mr de Rossa. It had been reported around the building that he had made such a prediction, in the event that Senator Mitchell was not appointed and the process broke down].

Transcript Source 10

Date: 12.06.1996

Extracts from a Northern Ireland Office (UK government department) record of a morning session during the peace talks on 12 June 1996 in Stormont, Belfast. The notes were recorded by a UK government official, Catalogue ref: CJ 4/12228

Confidential. Ref:INT/3

RECORD OF PLENARY SESSION, CASTLE BUILDINGS, 12 JUNE

Independent Chairman (after adjournment)

Senator Mitchell. General de Chastelain. Mr Holkeri

British government team

Secretary of State. Michael Ancram. Sir David Fell

Irish government team

Tánaiste. Mrs Owen. Mr de Rossa

Alliance Party

Dr Alerdice. Mr Close. Mr Neeson

Labour

Malachi Curran

NI Women's Coalition

Ms McWilliams. Ms Sagar

PUP

Mr Smyth. Mr Ervine

SDLP

Mr Hume. Mr Mallon. Mr. McGrady

UDP

Mr McMichael. Mr White

UDUP (for part of meeting)

Dr Paisley. Mr Robinson. Rev McCrea

UK Unionist (for part of meeting)

Mr McCartney. Dr O'Brien. Mr Wilson

UUP

Mr Trimble. Mr Taylor. Mr Empey

1. The meeting began at 12.20 am.

5. When other delegates had arrived, the Secretary of State opened the meeting. The day had seen a long and useful period of deliberation, which had led the two Governments to put forward a paper which they believed offered a way forward (A possible approach to resolving procedural difficulties, 00.01am draft, annexed at A). On the basis of this, in particular paragraph 4.1, he invited Senator Mitchell to take over, following a five minute adjournment. Dr Paisley shouted 'No, no, no'; and the rest of his delegation, and the UKUP's, left, with disparaging comments about 'British democracy'; Mr Wilson (UKUP) moved to take over one of the Independent Chairmen's chairs.

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Transcript Source 10

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Source 11: Press release peace talks update

Catalogue Ref: CJ 4/12228

NORTHERN IRELAND: MULTI-PARTY TALKS

12 JUNE

Press Statement

The participants in the talks engaged in a round of intensive bilateral exchanges during the day.

In a plenary meeting they agreed the approach to resolving procedural difficulties set out in the attached paper.

At the invitation of the two Governments, Senator Mitchell assumed the chair of the opening plenary session. General de Chastelain and Mr Holkeri were appointed as chairman of Strand 2 and the Business Committee and alternate chairman respectively.

The British and Irish Governments, the Alliance Party, Labour, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, the Progressive Unionist Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the Ulster Democratic Party and the Ulster Unionist Party all confirmed their total and absolute commitment specifically to the principles of democracy and non-violence as set out in paragraph 20 of the report of the International Body.

The participants will meet again this morning to confer on the issues mentioned in paragraph 5 of the attached paper.

Transcript Source 11

Date: 12.06.1996

A copy of a press release concerning the peace talks so far. It was tabled by Senator Mitchell at the end of the meeting and there were no objections from those present, 12 June 1996, Catalogue ref: CJ 4/12228

12 June

NORTHERN IRELAND: MULTI-PARTY TALKS

Press Statement

The participants in the talks engaged in a round of intensive bilateral exchanges during the day. In a plenary meeting they agreed the approach resolving procedural difficulties set out in the attached paper.

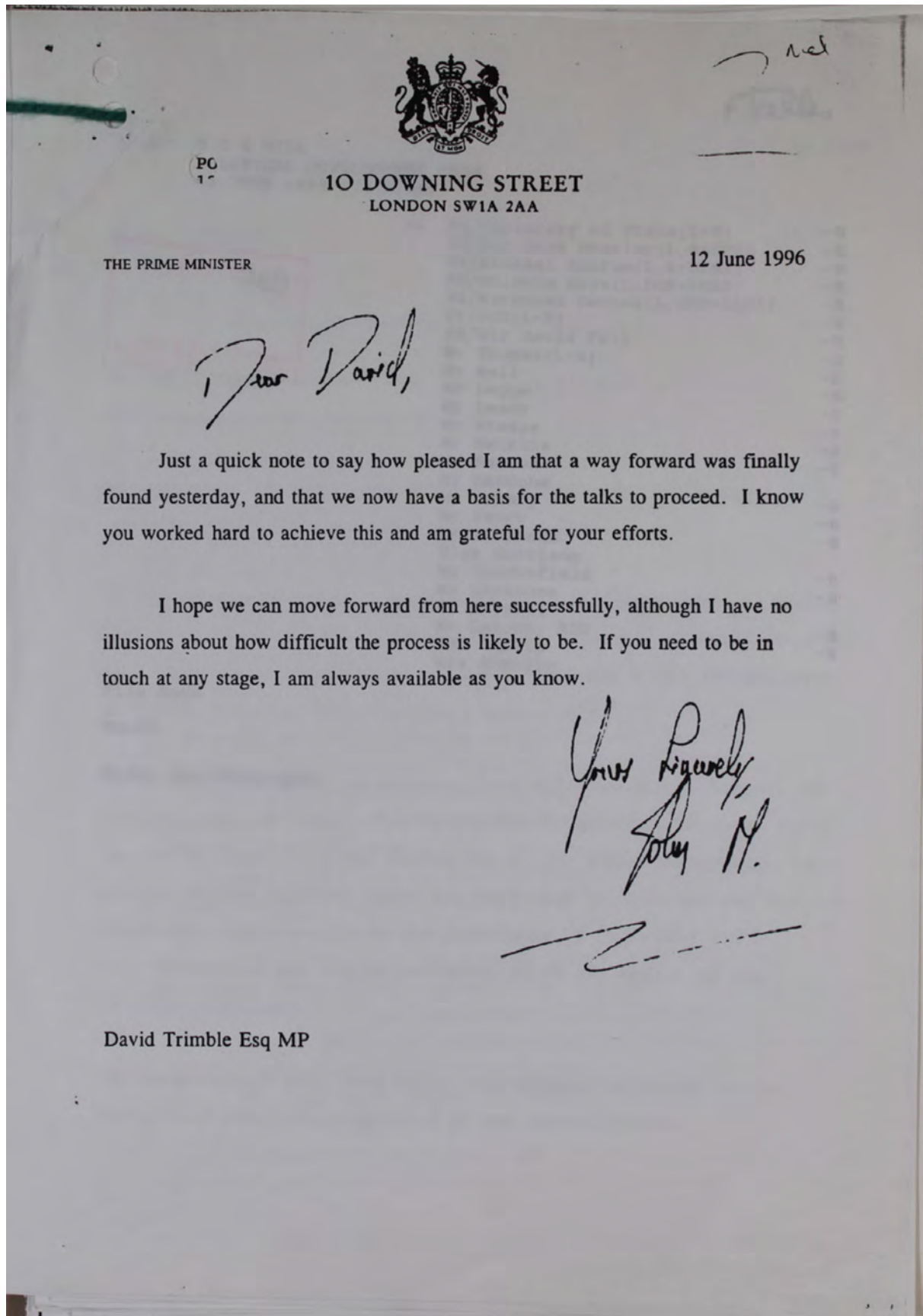
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The participants will meet again this morning to confer on the issues mentioned in paragraph 5 of the attached paper.

Source 12: P.M. John Major meets David Trimble Ulster Unionist Party

Catalogue Ref: CJ4/12228



Transcript Source 12

Date: 12.06.1996

Letter from UK Prime Minister, John Major, to David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, June 1996, Catalogue ref: CJ4/12228

10 Downing Street

London

SW1A 2AA

The Prime Minister

12 June 1996

Dear David,

Just a quick note to say how pleased I am that a way forward was finally found yesterday, and that we now have a basis for the talks to proceed. I know you worked hard to achieve this and am grateful for your efforts.

I hope we can move forward from here successfully, although I have no illusions about how difficult the process is likely to be. If you need to be in touch at any stage, I am always available as you know.

Yours Sincerely,


John M

David Trimble Esq MP

Source 13: P.M. John Major meets SDLP leader John Hume

Catalogue Ref: National Archive of Ireland, TAOIS-2021-98-18 1996-09-27

27-SEP-96 12.39 FROM: 10 DOWNING ST (CF) ID: PAGE 3


10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

27 September 1996

John Major

Thank you for your letter of 8 August and the text which you faxed on 6 September.

The IRA's position, as you describe it, is that if we were ready to make this statement, and the IRA knew when we were going to make it, they would respond shortly afterwards, at a time specified in advance, with an unequivocal restoration of the August 1994 "total cessation".

When I wrote to you on 24 July, I said that the IRA should restore their ceasefire without any further prevarication. But, in response to the suggestion that reassurances from the British Government on certain issues in line with its established public policy would help to bring this about, I set out words which could be used.

Now they have returned with one significant issue - the timeframe - which is simply not under our control, and an altogether longer text covering a host of other issues. Meanwhile, continued preparation for further IRA attacks goes on, as the arrests and arms finds on Monday demonstrate all too clearly. Intimidation and so-called punishment attacks also continue to increase in

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27-SEP-96 12.39 FROM: 10 DOWNING ST (CF) ID: PAGE 4

- 2 -

number and brutality. As I have already said publicly, Sinn Féin's talk of peace can have little credibility against this background.

It remains the case that the IRA should restore their ceasefire without further ado and without the need for further statements. The Government is certainly not in the business of negotiating a restoration of the IRA ceasefire, nor in giving secret assurances to bring it about. Sinn Féin must understand that we mean in private what we say in public.

Nevertheless, if there is genuine doubt or uncertainty over the Government's policy, I am happy to look at that. Because I am in no doubt of the benefits, for the people of Northern Ireland and the negotiations, of a genuine and unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire, we will repeat and reaffirm our approach on the key issues. The attached text has been prepared for this purpose, and will be published in the near future.

John Hume
John H.

John Hume, First, M.P.

© NAI/TAOIS/2021/98/18

Transcript Source 13

Date: 27.09.1996

A letter from the UK Prime Minister John Major to the SDLP leader John Hume, September 1996, National Archive of Ireland, TAOIS-2021-98-18 1996-09-27

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 1AA
THE PRIME MINISTER
27 September 1996

Thank you for your letter of 8 August and the text which you faxed on 6 September.

The IRA's position, as you describe it, is that if we are ready to make this statement, and the IRA knew when we were going to make it, they would respond shortly afterwards, at a time specified in advance, with an unequivocal restoration of the August 1994 "total cessation". When I wrote to you on 24 July. I said that the IRA should restore their ceasefire without any further prevarication. But, in response to the suggestion that reassurances from the British Government on certain issues in line with its established public policy would help to bring this about, I set out words which could be used.

Now they have returned with one significant issue – the timeframe – which is simply not under our control, and an altogether longer text covering a host of other issues. Meanwhile, continued preparation for further IRA attacks goes on, as the arrests and arms finds on Monday demonstrated all too clearly. Intimidation and so-called punishment attacks also continue to increase in number and brutality. As I have already said publicly, Sinn Féin's talk of peace can have little credibility against this background.

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Yours sincerely

John M

Source 14: A conversation with David Ervine

Catalogue Ref: National Archives Ireland, DFA_2021_53_15 p1 and p2

Secure Fax: 352

✓ Ambassadors London &
Washington; Joint Secretary;
Counsellors A-I

14 April 1997

No of pages including this one: 3

To: HQ
For: Second Secretary O hUiginn

From: Belfast
From: Joint Secretary

Subj: Conversation with David Ervine

1. I had a conversation with David Ervine at a BIA reception last Friday evening.
2. Ervine was deeply pessimistic about the future of the Loyalist ceasefire in the wake of the IRA's shooting of Constable Alice Collins in Derry the previous day. It could be taken for granted, he said, that members of one or other of the CLMC's constituent organisations would respond over the next few days, probably by carrying out another attack on a Sinn Féin member.
3. Once again, this would be presented as a "measured response" to an IRA provocation. There would be no claim of responsibility and the CLMC ceasefire would remain technically intact. What concerned Ervine, however, was that the cumulative effect of the series of "measured responses" to date was to transfer the initiative increasingly away from the relatively moderate CLMC leadership and into the hands of a hard-line element who were demanding a full-scale return to paramilitary activity. It was only a matter of time, Ervine suggested, before the hard-liners would succeed in having the ceasefire brought explicitly to an end.
4. Part of the difficulty, according to Ervine, arose from friction and competition between the CLMC's three constituent groups. The rogue elements within each would claim that their particular organisation had been targetted in some recent IRA operation and that they were entitled, accordingly, to take retaliatory action. The greater the provocation from the IRA, the more these elements competed for the "honour" of responding to it - and the weaker the CLMC's restraining influence became.

Transcript Source 14

Date: 14.04.1997

Extract from a report written 14 April 1997 by an official to Seán Ó hUiginn, the Joint Secretary of the Anglo-Irish Secretariat in Belfast. It describes a conversation with David Ervine, a former Loyalist paramilitary and member of the Progressive Unionist Party, National Archives Ireland, DFA_2021_53_15 p1 and p2

14 April 1997

No of pages including this one 3

To: HQ

For: Second Secretary O hUiginn

From: Belfast

From: Joint Secretary

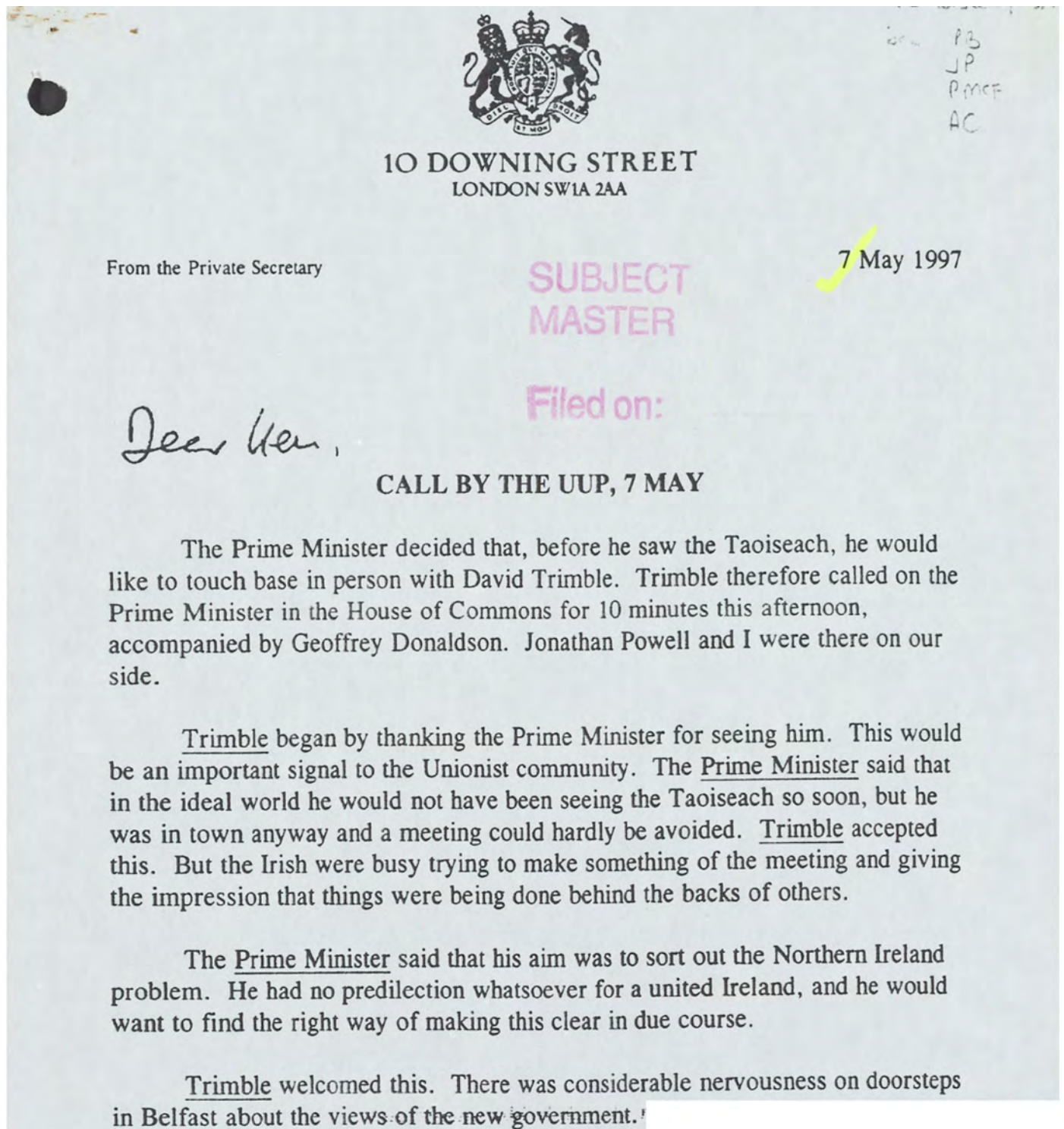
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Source 15: UK Prime Minister meets U.U.P politicians (1)

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/108



Transcript Source 15

Date: 07.05.1997

Part of a record of a meeting on 7 May 1997 between the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Jeffrey Donaldson, of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Catalogue ref: PREM 49/108

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

7 May 1997

Dear Ken

CALL BY THE UUP, 7 MAY

The Prime Minister decided that, before he saw the Taoiseach, he would like to touch base in person with David Trimble. Trimble therefore called on the Prime Minister in the House of Commons for 10 minutes this afternoon, accompanied by Geoffrey Donaldson. Jonathan Powell and I were there on our side.

Trimble began by thanking the Prime Minister for seeing him. This would be an important signal to the Unionist community. The Prime Minister said that in the ideal world he would not have been seeing the Taoiseach so soon, but he was in town anyway and a meeting could hardly be avoided. Trimble accepted this. But the Irish were busy trying to make something of the meeting and giving the impression that things were being done behind the backs of others. The Prime Minister said that his aim was to sort out the Northern Ireland problem. He had no predilection whatsoever for a united Ireland, and he would want to find the right way of making this clear in due course.

Trimble welcomed this. There was considerable nervousness on doorsteps in Belfast about the views of the new government.

Source 16: UK Prime Minister meets U.U.P.politicians (2)

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/108

The Prime Minister looked forward to the eventual solution. This would presumably involve a devolved assembly commanding confidence from both Unionists and Nationalists, and proper cross border arrangements. Both the UUP and SDLP appeared to envisage something like this. Taylor agreed but pointed out that there was a big difference between practical cross border cooperation e.g. the Foyle Fisheries Commission, and the kind of all Ireland bodies with executive powers demanded by the Irish government. If discussion could move away from the latter proposal, the package could be sold to Unionists. Meanwhile the current talks process was stuck. If the governments continued to wait for the IRA to make up their mind, and the argument about decommissioning continued, there would never be progress.

The Prime Minister suggested that it would be better if Sinn Fein were in the talks. Taylor disagreed. It was better for them to be out. They were not in practice in a position to go back to full scale violence because people would not accept it. Trimble agreed. The republicans were in a difficult position. They were not ready to turn their backs on violence definitively and found the choice of going wholly political unpalatable. There was a lot to be said for keeping them in their present awkward position. In theory it would be good to get Sinn Fein in, but only if they had genuinely given up violence. Otherwise the pressure on them should be maintained until the movement split. That would be inevitable because the Slab Murphys of this world would never give up violence.

Taylor drew attention to the problem for the UUP if violence got worse, and the Loyalists had to be thrown out of the talks. The UUP needed the Loyalists in order to meet the rules of sufficient consensus. Otherwise they could be out-voted by Paisley and McCartney. So it was extremely important to keep the Loyalists in if possible. Trimble emphasised the same point.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

Discussion moved to Irish elections and the prospect of Ahern as Taoiseach. Taylor suggested that, judging from his most recent comments, Ahern would be happy to see Sinn Fein in talks even without a ceasefire. Trimble said that he did not think Ahern would adopt this policy. He was very ignorant about Northern Ireland. But he had just had a reasonably good private meeting with Ahern - which Ahern had kept secret, unlike Trimble's experience with Bruon. However, Ahern would be subject to the influence of Martin Mansergh and others.

KK

h-e

bc JPo
AC
PB
pncf

12 May 1997

Ireland: Situation: Part 1

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

SUBJECT
MASTER

Filled on:

CONFIDENTIAL

CALL BY UUP, 12 MAY

From the Private Secretary

Dear Gen,

David Trimble and John D Taylor called on the Prime Minister this afternoon for about 45 minutes. Dr. Mowlam, Jonathan Stephens, Jonathan Powell and I were present on our side. The Prime Minister began by asking for Trimble's assessment of the situation.

Trimble said that he was particularly worried about the Loyalist ceasefire. The situation on the ground was worse than it had been for many years, with considerable tension in urban areas. Recent spontaneous attacks on individuals of one community or the other were the most obvious signs of this. The continuing IRA violence was a major factor, compounded by worry about what might happen in the marching season and, to a lesser degree, nervousness about a Labour government. Feelings in the Protestant community were not helped by public suggestions by Dr. Mowlam that the RUC could be radically reformed.

Transcript Source 16

Date: 12.05.1997

Part of a record of a meeting on 12 May 1997 between the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and John Taylor, the Deputy Leader of the UUP, Catalogue ref: PREM 49/108

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

12 May 1997

Dear Ken

CALL BY THE UUP, 12 MAY

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2

The Prime Minister looked forward to the eventual solution. This would presumably involve a devolved assembly commanding confidence from both Unionists and Nationalists, and proper cross border arrangements. Both the UUP and SDLP appeared to envisage something like this. Taylor agreed but pointed out that there was a big difference between practical cross border cooperation e.g. the Foyle Fisheries Commission, and the kind of all Ireland bodies with executive powers demanded by the Irish government. If discussion could move away from the latter proposal, the package could be sold to Unionists. Meanwhile the current talks process was stuck. If the governments continued to wait for the IRA to make up their mind, and the argument about decommissioning continued, there would never be progress.

The Prime Minister suggested that it would be better if Sinn Fein were in the talks. Taylor disagreed. It was better for them to be out. They were not in practice in a position to go back to full scale violence because people would not accept it. Trimble agreed. The republicans were in a difficult position. They were not ready to turn their backs on violence definitively and found the choice of going wholly political unpalatable. There was a lot to be said for keeping them in their present awkward position. In theory it would be good to get Sinn Fein in, but only if they had genuinely given up violence. Otherwise the pressure on them should be maintained until the movement split. That would be inevitable because the Slab Murphys of this world would never give up violence.

Taylor drew attention to the problem for the UUP if violence got worse, and the Loyalists had to be thrown out of the talks. The UUP needed the Loyalists in order to meet the rules of sufficient consensus. Otherwise they could be out-voted by Paisley and McCartney. So it was extremely important to keep the Loyalists in if possible. Trimble emphasised the same point.

Transcript Source 16

3

Discussion moved to Irish elections and the prospect of Ahern as Taoiseach. Taylor suggested that, judging from his most recent comments, Ahern would be happy to see Sinn Féin in talks even without a ceasefire. Trimble said that he did not think Ahern would adopt this policy. He was very ignorant about Northern Ireland. But he had just had a reasonably good private meeting with Ahern – which Ahern had kept secret, unlike Trimble's experience with Bruton. However, Ahern would be subject to the influence of Martin Mansergh and others.

Source 17: 'A new beginning' peace talks

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/403

A Chairde,

Ba mhaith liom a rá, ar son Sinn Féin go bhfuil athas orainn bheith anseo. Is lá stáiriúil é seo.

Today we enter into negotiations, the agreed outcome of which will inevitably mean far reaching change.

A democratic settlement acceptable to all the inhabitants of this island means that we need to approach these negotiations in the knowledge that the status quo has failed to deliver a society where all citizens are treated as equals.

A Democratic Peace Settlement:

There is no going back to the failed policies of the past. Partition has failed. The partition of this small island and the division of our people have created a failed political entity in the North of our country. The inequality and the discrimination against nationalists and the militarisation of this part of our country must end.

This requires a negotiated and democratic settlement of the conflict. We now, for the first time since partition, have the opportunity to negotiate that settlement.

Britain's policy which resulted in the undemocratic partition of our national territory, sustains division among our people, and it follows that our people cannot be united while our country remains divided.

There Must Be Change

We enter into these negotiations as Irish Republicans but in a spirit of openness, flexibility and friendship. We are willing to engage in real and meaningful negotiations with those who come to these negotiations with a pro-Union agenda. Our objective is, through dialogue among all the people of this island, to achieve an agreed Ireland.

It is our view that Britain's policy is the root cause of the conflict in our country and therefore is the key matter which must be addressed in these negotiations.

All political, economic and historical arguments prove that a United Ireland offers the best guarantee of equal citizenship and the basis for stability and an enduring peace. History has shown that an internal Six-County arrangement is not a viable option. An 'arrangement' is not a solution.

Furthermore both the British and Irish governments and all of the Nationalist parties on this island are agreed that an internal settlement is not a solution.

Overcoming Mistrust

We can empathise with the concerns of the unionist population about their position in an Irish national democracy. And in this process they must be addressed and resolved in a real manner. We need to reach an agreement which rejects exclusion for any reason. That is not only the basic concept of democracy but a practical necessity if we are to reach a settlement and an agreed peaceful Ireland.

Sinn Féin is aware that there is mistrust between republicans and the unionist section of our people. We realise also that dialogue and negotiation is the best way of dealing with that mistrust. We believe that this dialogue and negotiation can be the bed-rock on which, together, we can build a peaceful settlement to this age old conflict.

For too long we have fought with each other and talked past each other. It is time that we started talking and listening to each other.

Sinn Féin recognises that all sides have suffered and that great patience will be required in any process of reconciliation. We want to reach an accommodation with the unionist people of this island.

We want to overcome the mistrust which exists between us. But building trust and reaching accommodation is a shared responsibility. The unionists must also want to build trust and reach an accommodation.

Transcript Source 17

Date: 07.10.1997

Extracts from an opening statement by Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féin's Vice President and chief negotiator at the peace talks in Stormont, Belfast, 7 October 1997. The title of the statement was 'A New Beginning,' Catalogue ref: PREM 49/403

A Chairde,

Ba mhaith liom a rá ar son Sinn Féin, go bhfuil athas orainn bheith anseo. Is lá stáiriúil é seo. Today we enter int negotiations, the agreed outcome of which will inevitably mean far reaching change.

A democratic settlement acceptable to all the inhabitants of this island means that we need to approach these negotiations in the knowledge that the status quo has failed to deliver a society where all citizens are treated as equals.

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Transcript Source 17

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Sinn Féin recognises that all sides have suffered and that great patience will be required in any process of reconciliation. We want to reach an accommodation with the unionist people of this island.

We want to overcome the mistrust which exists between us. But building trust and reaching accommodation is a shared responsibility. The unionists must also want to build trust and reach an accommodation.

Source 18: Ulster Unionist Party at Peace talks

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/403

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

Statement
by the

Ulster Unionist Party

Launch of Strand 1 Talks

7 October 1997

The Ulster Unionist Party is participating in these talks because the best way to defend and promote the cause of the Union is not by abstention, but by fighting for our cause from within the talks process. Too often, we have seen the wishes of the greater number of people of Northern Ireland ignored and the imposition of so-called solutions, such as the Anglo-Irish agreement, forced upon them. These talks require the principle of consent to be accepted by the participants and the reality that the Union will continue for as long as that is the wish of the greater number of the people in Northern Ireland. By attending these talks the Ulster Unionist Party is determined to challenge the sincerity of Sinn Fein/IRA's declared commitment to peace and to the democratic process. We view consent and actual disarmament as a test of Sinn Fein/IRA's commitment to exclusively peaceful means as required by the Mitchell Principles. Terrorists must not be allowed to use, or threaten to use, their weaponry in order to extract concessions at the table of democracy. If Sinn Fein/IRA is truly committed to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of achieving political accommodation within Northern Ireland, it no longer needs to retain its murderous arsenal.

The Ulster Unionist Party and its supporters oppose a United Ireland because we are British. We actively espouse the United Kingdom and the Union that exists between the people of England, Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland. We believe that the United Kingdom, by adding up those four parts, equals more than the sum of those four parts, and it reflects the interaction which has existed in the British Isles throughout history. The Union with Great Britain is a Union in the hearts and minds of the Unionist people. The feeling of Britishness is not a device or artifice which has been imposed on an unsuspecting people by successive British governments. Britishness is at the heart of the Unionist philosophy, the feeling of belonging; the feeling of sharing with our fellow-citizens in Great Britain in great national events; of being part of something larger than simply the six counties in the north-eastern corner of this island. It is a shared psychological bond; a shared emotional bond, common bonds of history and of shared adversities, shared triumphs and shared sacrifices.

3 glengall street
belfast 12
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fax 01232 246738

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building
your future
within **the union**

SINCE 1177, when the Normans came to Ulster, eastern Ulster has been loyal to the crown of, firstly England, and then, Great Britain. But, our Britishness is more than loyalty to the Crown. It is a sense of communion with the rest of the peoples of the United Kingdom, built up over centuries. Northern Ireland itself has been a part of the United Kingdom from before the time when Nelson defeated the French at Trafalgar and before Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. Our ancestors shared in the project of the Empire; sacrificed themselves for King and Country on the battlefields of Europe, whilst Republicans rose in revolt in Ireland; and stood alone with Britain during the Second World War, while our southern neighbour remained aloof from the battle to preserve European civilisation. Indeed, as Winston Churchill said,

'But for the loyalty of Northern Ireland....the light which now shines so brightly throughout the World, would have been quenched.'

In short, our sense of Britishness was forged in sweat and blood.

Transcript Source 18

Date: 07.10.1997

Extracts from an opening statement by Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), which was led by David Trimble, at the peace talks in Stormont, Belfast, on 7 October 1997. [Trimble was not present]
Catalogue ref: PREM 49/403

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

Statement by the Ulster Unionist Party

Launch of Strand 1 Talks

7 October 1997

The Ulster Unionist Party is participating in these talks because the best way to defend and promote the cause of the Union is not by abstention, but by fighting for our cause from within the talks process. Too often, we have seen the wishes of the greater number of people of Northern Ireland ignored and the imposition of so-called solutions, such as the Anglo-Irish agreement, forced upon them. These talks require the principle of consent to be accepted by the participants and the reality that the Union will continue for as long as that is the wish of the greater number of the people in Northern Ireland. By attending these talks the Ulster Unionist Party is determined to challenge the sincerity of Sinn Féin/IRA's declared commitment to peace and to the democratic process. We view consent and actual disarmament as a test of Sinn Féin's commitment to exclusively peaceful means as required by the Mitchell Principles. Terrorists must not be allowed to use, or threaten to use, their weaponry in order to extract concessions at the table of democracy. If Sinn Féin/IRA is truly committed to democratic and exclusively peaceful means of achieving political accommodation within Northern Ireland, it no longer needs to retain its murderous arsenal.

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Transcript Source 18

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In short, our sense of Britishness was forged in sweat and blood.

Source 19: Gerry Adams Sein Fein meets Northern Ireland parties

Catalogue Ref: National Archive of Ireland, TAOIS-2021-99-23 1997-10-07b

Sinn Féin enters these negotiations as an Irish republican party seeking to promote the broad nationalist objective of an end to British rule in Ireland.

It is our firm view that this Strand, which deals with north-south relations, is a critical area of negotiation because the resolution of this conflict will only be found in an all-Ireland context.

British policy at present upholds the union. It enforces the partition of Ireland. Democratic opinion in Ireland and in Britain must seek to change this policy to one of ending the union.

The issue of sovereignty, the claim of the British government to sovereignty in a part of Ireland, is a key matter which we will raise in the negotiations. Our objective is to achieve through dialogue among the Irish people an agreed Ireland. The political and historical evidence shows that political independence, a united Ireland, offers the best guarantee of equality and the most durable basis for peace and stability. An internal Six-County arrangement cannot work.

Equality

There are many issues which fuel the conflict. For example there needs to be equality of treatment in terms of employment, economic development and the Irish language and culture, as well as on the difficult issue of cultural symbols, of flags and emblems. In other words there needs to be equality in all sectors of society - in social, economic, cultural, education, justice, democratic and national rights issues.

These issues do not require negotiation. They are issues of basic civil and human rights. The British government should act on these issues immediately by outlining a programmatic approach which delivers real change, which makes equality a reality and which builds confidence in the wider peace process. The immediate responsibility for equality rests with the British government and there should be no artificial distinctions, no arbitrary barriers placed in the way of these rights.

But the Irish government and Irish nationalists also have a responsibility, a responsibility to ensure that the concerns and fears of the unionist population are addressed and resolved through negotiation. A process of national reconciliation must secure the political, religious and democratic rights of the northern unionist population. That is not only the democratic norm but a practical necessity if we are to advance the cause of peace in Ireland.

Bridging the Gap of Distrust

I welcome the contribution of Senator Mitchell and his colleagues to the negotiating process. Sinn Féin has long argued for an international dimension to the search for peace in Ireland. The international dimension is one which can play a crucial part in maintaining the momentum and dynamic through the negotiations.

There is a huge gap of distrust between nationalists and unionists. It must be bridged. We need to secure an accommodation, based on equality.

Building peace is a collective responsibility. In setting out the

republican position I also want to stress our willingness to listen to other positions and to see and to uphold the dignity of all sections of our people.

The British government also has a crucial and constructive role to play in persuading unionists to reach a democratic agreement on the issue of Irish national reunification with the rest of the people of this island and to encourage, facilitate and enable such agreement.

Transcript Source 19

Date: 07.10.1997

Extracts from the opening remarks of Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams to the first meeting of Northern Ireland parties and the UK and Irish governments in October 1997, National Archive of Ireland, TAOIS-2021-99-23 1997-10-07b

Sinn Féin enters these negotiations as an Irish republican party seeking to promote the broad nationalist objective of an end to British rule in Ireland.

It is our firm view that this Strand, which deals with north-south relations, is a critical area of negotiation because the resolution of this conflict will only be found in an all-Ireland context. British policy at present upholds the union. It enforces the partition of Ireland. Democratic opinion in Ireland and in Britain must seek to change this policy to one of ending the union. The issue of sovereignty, the claim of the British government to sovereignty in a part of Ireland, is a key matter which we will raise in the negotiations. Our objective is to achieve through dialogue among the Irish people an agreed Ireland. The political and historical evidence shows that political independence, a united Ireland, offers the best guarantee of equality and the most durable basis for peace and stability. An internal Six-County arrangement cannot work.

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Transcript Source 19

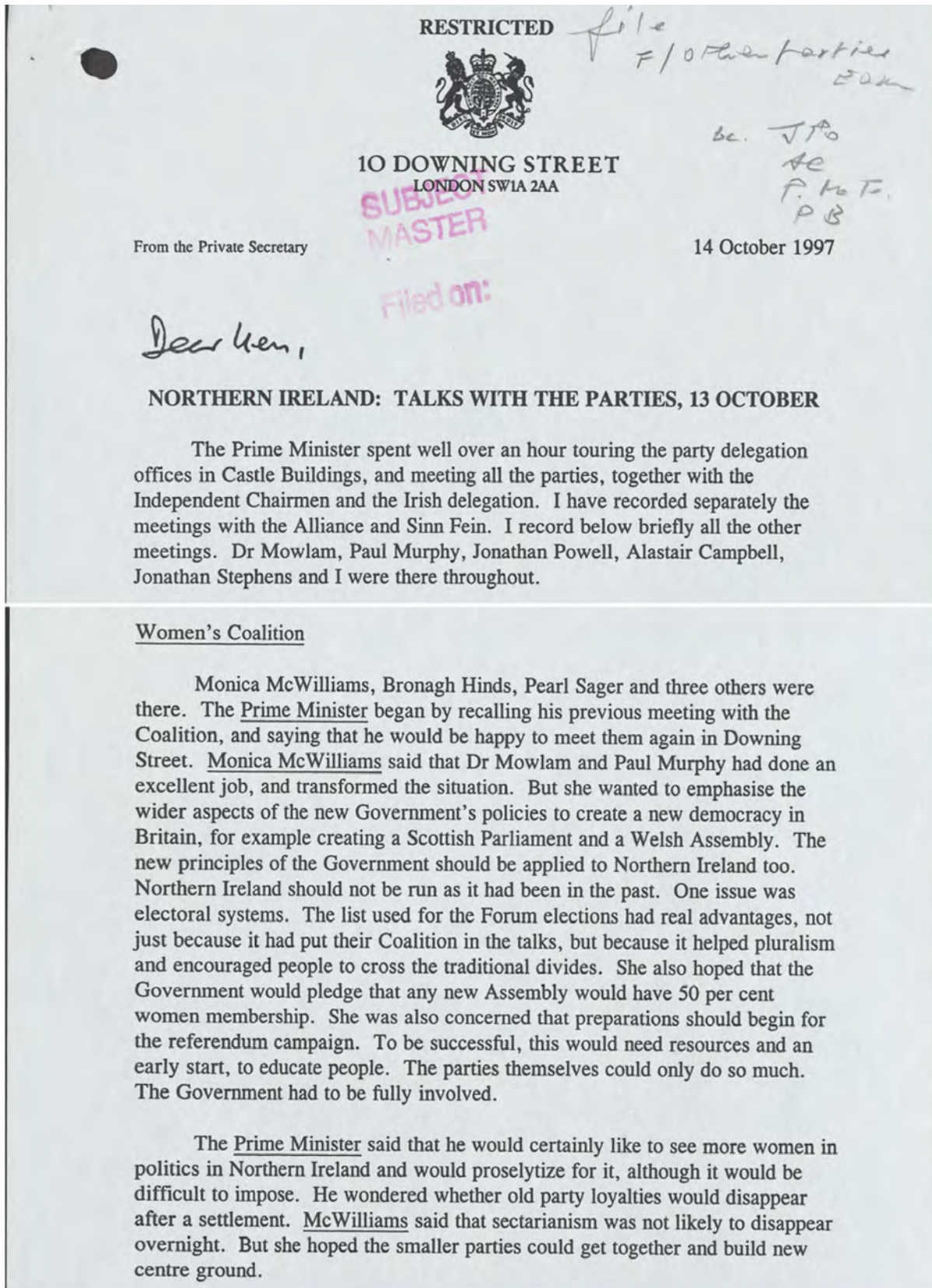
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The British government also has a crucial and constructive role to play in persuading unionists to reach a democratic agreement on the issue of Irish national reunification with the rest of the people of this island and to encourage, facilitate and enable such agreement.

Source 20: Talks with political parties and communities in Northern Ireland

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/119



Transcript Source 20

Date: 14.10.1997

Extract from a report summarising talks between the UK government and various political parties and community groups in Northern Ireland, 14 October 1997, Catalogue ref: PREM 49/119

From the Private Secretary

14 October 1997

Dear Ken

NORTHERN IRELAND: TALKS WITH THE PARTIES, 13 OCTOBER

The Prime Minister spent well over an hour touring the party delegation offices in Castle Buildings, and meeting all the parties, together with the Independent Chairmen and the Irish delegation. I have recorded separately the meetings with the Alliance and Sinn Féin. I record below briefly all the other meetings. Dr Mowlam, Paul Murphy, Jonathan Powell, Alastair Campbell, Jonathan Stephens and I were there throughout.

Women's Coalition

Monica McWilliams, Bronagh Hinds, Pearl Sager and three others were there. The Prime Minister began by recalling his previous meeting with the Coalition, and saying that he would be happy to meet them again in Downing Street. Monica McWilliams said that Dr Mowlam and Paul Murphy had done an excellent job, and transformed the situation. But she wanted to emphasise the wider aspects of the new Government's policies to create a new democracy in Britain, for example creating a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly. The new principles of the Government should be applied to Northern Ireland too. Northern Ireland should not be run as it had been in the past. One issue was electoral systems. The list used for the Forum elections had real advantages, not just because it had put their Coalition in the talks, but because it helped pluralism and encouraged people to cross the traditional divides. She also hoped that the Government would pledge that any new Assembly would have 50 per cent women membership. She was also concerned that preparations should begin for the referendum campaign. To be successful, this would need resources and an early start, to educate people. The parties themselves could only do so much. The Government had to be fully involved.

The Prime Minister said that he would certainly like to see more women in politics in Northern Ireland and would proselytize for it, although it would be difficult to impose. He wondered whether old party loyalties would disappear after a settlement. McWilliams said that sectarianism was not likely to disappear overnight. But she hoped the smaller parties could get together and build new centre ground.

Source 21: Memo from A. Campbell

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/121

File of tree met

From: Alastair Campbell
Date: 29 November 1997

separate copies to:

cc: Carol Allen

JONATHAN POWELL

JOHN HOLMES

cc: Holmes

CHRISTMAS TREE

I am not sure what our arrangements are for putting up a Christmas tree, but can I alert you to a potential problem?

With Gerry Adams due in on 11 December, we need to think through whether we want him photographed with the No 10 door and a Christmas tree.

Given the attacks we will have to fend off over him coming at all, do we want the added problem of the symbolism of Gerry Adams as a man of peace, bringing glad tidings, and all the other Christmas clichés that will be churned out?

ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

ne

Transcript Source 21

Date: 29.11.1997

Memo from Alastair Campbell to Jonathan Powell and John Holmes, 29 November, 1997,
Catalogue ref: PREM 49/121

From: Alistair Campbell

Date: 29 November 1997

cc: Carol Allen

separate copies to:

JONATHAN POWELL

JOHN HOLMES

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ALASTAIR CAMPBELL

Source 22: P.M. Tony Blair meets Taoiseach Bertie Ahern in March

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/410

CONVERSATION WITH THE TAOISEACH, 28 MARCH

The Prime Minister and Ahern spoke for about 20 minutes this morning. Ahern began by saying he had been out and about selling the idea of change to Articles 2 and 3. It was a tough debate at times, but civilised and worth having now. He understood there had been a good Liaison Group meeting the previous day. For his part he was trying to bring Sinn Fein along into Strand 1. But it was not easy keeping the nervous horses of Sinn Fein and the SDLP on side, not least with the Hume/Mallon strains. The North-South bodies were his main concern, as a counterweight to Articles 2 and 3. There was a widespread fear that if they depended for their functioning on going back to the Northern Ireland Assembly regularly for agreement, Paisley and McCartney would team up with other troublemakers to ensure they never got off the ground.

The Prime Minister agreed this was the toughest area. The Unionists feared things would be agreed in the North-South Council against their will. He had been putting pressure on them to accept actual implementation bodies up front in 5 or 6 areas, but they wanted a guarantee that the North-South Council would not become a kind of independent, self-standing body, which is why they wanted the Council itself to be consultative, with a work programme. He had told them there had to be an all-Ireland dimension and thought he could get them to agree to this (although some said he was over-optimistic). But they could not budge on the importance of the Assembly mandate.

Ahern said he had made clear he did not envisage a third government. But a body in say the Arts or Heritage area should not have to go back to the full Assembly every time it wanted to move forward. He thought in practice there would not be these problems of obstruction, but these worries were real, and unless they were met, he could not sell Articles 2 and 3.

Ahern said he was working hard on Sinn Fein to be a constructive part of the Assembly. There had to be some voting safeguard to avoid the old Unionist monolith.

The Prime Minister agreed, although Trimble would naturally be hard to persuade of Sinn Fein good faith. In any case he saw his own task as persuading Trimble to accept that North-South bodies, once established, could function, and that the Assembly could not be a Unionist ramp. Policing and prisoners would also be very difficult, and might have to be left to last. We had to be careful on policing. The immediate priorities were to get in the right areas on Strands 1 and 2. Mitchell wanted an overall text down on Wednesday but that was almost certainly too soon. He might have to talk to Mitchell to persuade him of that. Meanwhile he proposed that the Taoiseach should come to London a little early for ASEM and have dinner on Wednesday night, with just Teahon and myself there. (Comment: I had prewarned Teahon of this idea). Ahern said he would be delighted to do this, but he might want another official there, to keep his team in the picture. We should not publicise the idea for now.

CONFIDENTIAL

Transcript Source 22

Date: 28.03.1998

Notes from a meeting between the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, 28 March 1998, Catalogue ref: PREM 49/410

CONVERSATION WITH THE TAOISEACH, 28 MARCH

The Prime Minister and Ahern spoke for about 20 minutes this morning. Ahern began by saying he had been out and about selling the idea of change to Articles 2 and 3. It was a tough debate at times, but civilised and worth having now. He understood there had been a good Liaison Group meeting the previous day. For his part he was trying to bring Sinn Féin along into Strand 1. But it was not easy keeping the nervous horses of Sinn Féin and the SDLP on side, not least with the Hume/Mallon strains. The North-South bodies were his main concern, as a counterweight to Articles 2 and 3. There was a widespread fear that if they depended for their functioning on going back to the Northern Ireland Assembly regularly for agreement, Paisley and McCartney would team up with other troublemakers to ensure they never got off the ground.

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We should not publicise the idea for now.

CONFIDENTIAL

Source 23: Northern Ireland on TV news

Catalogue Ref: National Archives of Ireland, DFA. 2021.53.15

Comments from Jeffrey Donaldson (UUP) and David Adams (UDP)

UTV Live at Six - 7 April 1998

Interviewer: Mr Donaldson what is the main problem for your party?

Mr Donaldson: We are not going to sign up to some sort of charter for a United Ireland. What we require, especially from the Irish Government, is some movement. Last week, the Irish Prime Minister said he would not compromise and the result has been the kind of proposals in this document which cannot form the basis of an agreement acceptable to Unionists. We now are prepared to negotiate in good faith and if they don't, then we are not going to get agreement.

Interviewer: David Adams, is your party unhappy?

Mr Adams: Well, we are unhappy with the document as it sits and Jeffrey is quite right to say that it doesn't form the basis of an agreement that Unionism could buy into and we, as Unionist parties, will refuse to give our acquiescence to anything which the Unionist population could not be happy with.

Interviewer: Could you walk away from it this week?

Mr Adams: We, at this stage, have no desire or no inclination whatsoever to walk away from the negotiations. Jeffrey is quite right when he says what has to happen now is people have to plug in to "planet reality" and try and understand the position that we are in and try and create a real agreement that Unionism can happily buy into.

Interviewer: Jeffrey Donaldson, what does the Prime Minister have to do?

- 2 -

Mr Donaldson: I think the Prime Minister and for that matter the Irish Government, have take a long look at these proposals. There has got to be fundamental changes if we are going to get agreement, if there is to be an agreement to which Unionists can put their hand to we must see fundamental changes made to the kind of ideas that are being put forward. Otherwise, unfortunately, if people are not prepared to compromise, we are not going to get agreement.

Transcript Source 23

Date: 07.04.1998

A transcript of an interview from a TV news programme in Northern Ireland, Live at Six, 7 April, 1998, National Archives of Ireland, DFA. 2021.53.15

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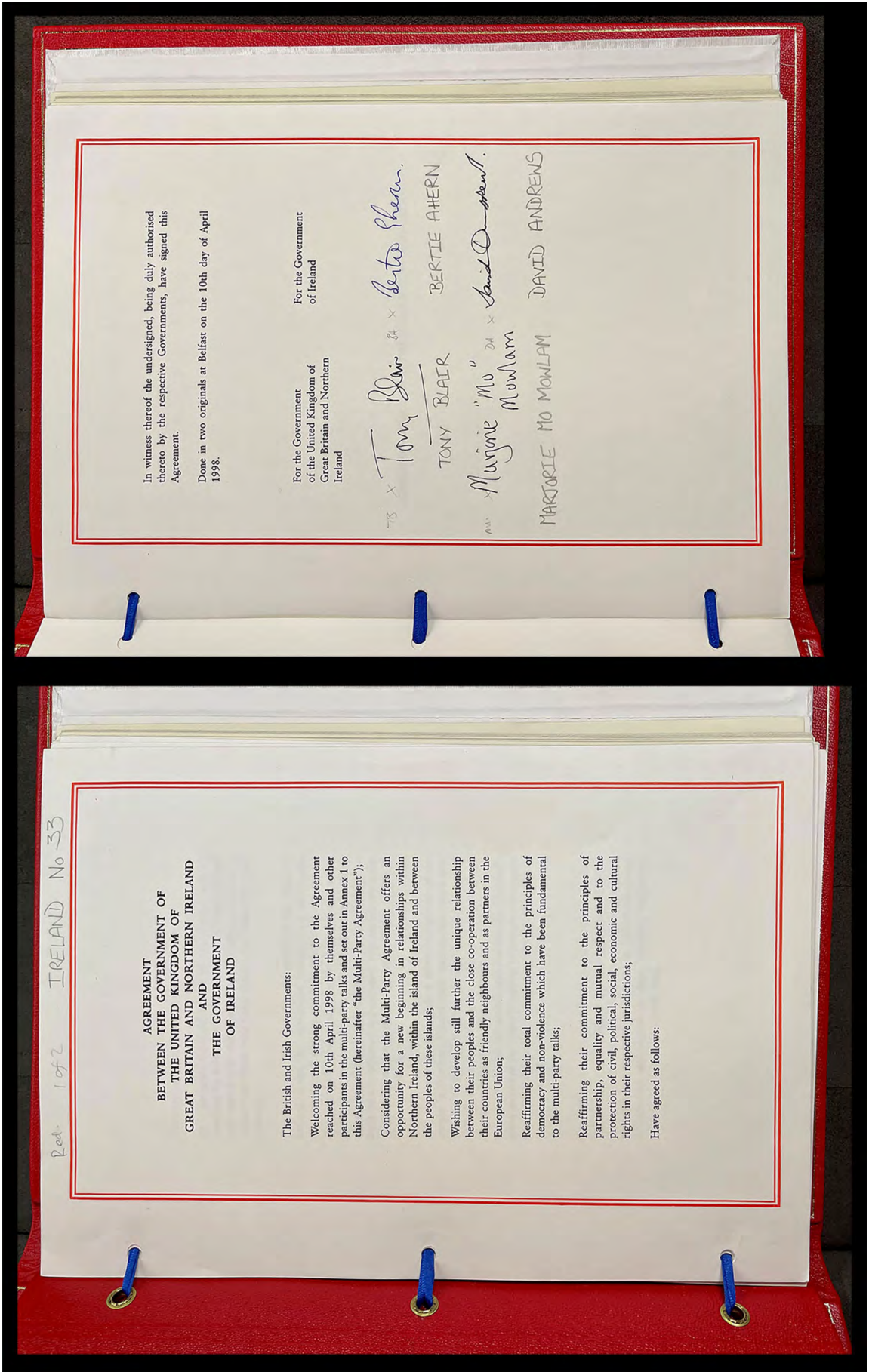
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Interviewer: Jeffrey Donaldson, what does the Prime Minister have to do?

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Source 24: Belfast Good Friday Agreement
Catalogue Ref: FO 93/171/33



Transcript Source 24

Date: 10.04.1998

The Belfast (Good Friday Agreement) signed by the UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Dr Mo Mowlam, the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern and the Tánaiste, David Andrews, 10 April 1998, Catalogue ref: FO 93/171/33

Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland

The British and Irish Governments:

Welcoming the strong commitment to the Agreement reached on 10th April 1998 by themselves and other participants in the multi-party talks and set out in Annex 1 to this agreement (hereinafter “the Multi-Party Agreement”);

Considering that the Multi-Party agreement offers an opportunity for a new beginning in relationships within Northern Ireland, within the island of Ireland and between the peoples of these islands;

Wishing to develop still further the unique relationship between their peoples and the close co-operation between their countries as friendly neighbours and as partners in the European Union;

Reaffirming their commitment to the principles of partnership, equality and mutual respect and to the protection of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights in their respective jurisdictions;

Have agreed as follows:

–

In witness thereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto by the respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

Done in two originals at Belfast on the 10th day of April 1998.

For the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Tony Blair

Marjorie Mo Mowlam

For the Government of Ireland

Bertie Ahern

David Andrews

Source 25: U.S. President Bill Clinton answers questions

Catalogue Ref: National Archive of Ireland, TAOIS-2021-100-7 1998-04-10

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 10, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE PROCESS

The Oval Office

2:30 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon. After a 30-year winter of sectarian violence, Northern Ireland today has the promise of a springtime of peace. The agreement that has emerged from the Northern Ireland peace talks opens the way for the people there to build a society based on enduring peace, justice, and equality. The vision and commitment of the participants in the talks has made real the prayers for peace on both sides of the Atlantic and both sides of the peace line.

On this Good Friday, we give thanks for the work of Prime Minister Ahern and Prime Minister Blair, two truly remarkable leaders who did an unbelievable job in these talks. We give thanks for the work of Senator George Mitchell, who was brilliant and unbelievably patient and long suffering. We give thanks especially to the leaders of the parties, for they had to make the courageous decisions. We also thank Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern's predecessors for starting and nurturing the process of peace.

Q Mr. President, what promises or assurances did the United States make to help move this process along?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, from the very beginning all I have tried to do is to help create the conditions in which peace could develop, and then to do whatever I was asked to do or whatever seemed helpful to encourage and support the parties in the search for peace. And that's all I did last night.

Q Did you offer any assistance in terms of financial aid, and what did you think --

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q -- where did you really weigh in in all those phone calls.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, the answer to your first question is no. Now, we have, as all of you know, an international fund for Ireland, which I have strongly supported. And I do believe that there will be very significant economic benefits flowing to the people of Ireland, both Protestant and Catholic, in Northern Ireland and in the Republic, if this peace takes hold. But there was no specific financial assurance sought, nor was any given.

In terms of the give and take, you know, I made a lot of phone calls last night and up until this morning -- actually until right before the last session. But I think the specifics are not all that important. I did what I was asked to do. Again, I was largely guided by the work of Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern. I had a very -- a long talk, in the middle of the night for me, last night with Senator Mitchell about his work there, and I'm looking forward to seeing him early next week. I just did what I thought would help. And I tried to do what I was asked to do.

Q Mr. President, will you be going to Belfast now that they've reached a deal?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I really haven't had much discussion about it. No decision has been made. This is not even a day to think about that. This is a day to celebrate the achievement of the people and the peace talks.

Q President Clinton, do you feel somewhat vindicated for the policies that -- including giving Gerry Adams a visa here -- that have come under scrutiny and at times have brought you some derision from other parts of the world for being too provocative.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, when I did it, I thought it would help to create a climate in which peace might emerge. And I believe it was a positive thing to do. I believed it then, I believe it now.

But make no mistake about it. Whenever peace is made by people anywhere, the credit belongs to the parties whose own lives and livelihoods and children and future are on the line. And that's the way I feel today. If anything that I or the United States was able to do was helpful, especially because of our historic ties to Great Britain and because of the enormous number of Irish Americans we have and the feelings we have for the Irish and their troubles, then I am very grateful. But the credit for this belongs to the people who made the decisions.

Transcript Source 25

Date: 13.04.1998

Extracts from a Question and Answer session between US President Bill Clinton and US journalists on 13 April 1998, National Archive of Ireland, TAOIS-2021-100-7 1998-04-10

THE WHITE HOUSE

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For Immediate Release

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Source 26: Report on final 72 days of negotiations

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412

Tuesday 7 April

The situation looked bleak as we arrived in Belfast late on Tuesday afternoon. The decision by Mitchell to insist on including in the text put on the table late on Monday night two long unagreed annexes of issues for North-South co-operation had pushed the Unionists over the edge. They also found the sections on rights, policing, prisoners etc, which they had not seen before, too green for their taste. We therefore invited Trimble to Hillsborough immediately after our arrival, to allow him to explain at length his objections to the text. With the important exceptions of the North-South section and decommissioning, these objections did not seem insuperable. As important, he still seemed interested in a deal.

In the light of all this we worked overnight on proposed amendments to put to the Irish the following morning.

Transcript Source 26

Date: 13.04.1998

Extract from a report written by John Holmes, who was Principal Private Secretary (a senior official) to the UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair on the final 72 days of negotiations, Tuesday 7 April 1998, Catalogue ref: PREM 49/412

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In the light of all this we worked overnight on proposed amendments to put to the Irish the following morning.

Source 27: 6 extracts from final report: April 8

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412

Wednesday 8 April

The Prime Minister spoke to Trimble first thing to reassure him that we would be pressing Ahern for radical change. When Ahern arrived from Dublin for breakfast (before returning to Dublin for his mother's funeral), the Prime Minister stressed that there would have to be radical change, particularly to the North-South Annexes, if there was to be a real hope of a deal. Ahern made clear in response that he and his team were ready to have a crack at amending the paper, in particular the North-South part. But he also stressed his own difficulties, and his fear that if one Unionist set of demands was met, another one would quickly appear.

Subsequent negotiation on the North-South text between Gallagher, Teahon, myself and Bill Jeffrey, while the Prime Minister went to Castle Buildings to meet other parties, showed that the Irish had indeed been shaken by the Unionist and other reaction and were ready to make significant changes. The infamous Annexes were deleted, and the text moved a considerable way towards Unionist concerns. The process therefore looked as if it might get back on track, although there was great concern on the nationalist side that the Unionists were refusing to engage on Strand 1 until their Strand 2 (North/South) concerns were sorted out.

This was followed by a difficult meeting with the UUP team. Empey was particularly insistent that, unless the Irish were prepared to consider radical change, not only in Strand 2, the process was going nowhere. Unionist

annoyance with headline Irish public statements in previous days was very clear. The Prime Minister underlined the need to meet the Irish fear that there would never be any North-South implementation bodies because of Unionist sabotage. Trimble suggested (for the first but not last time) that the Irish actually wanted to damage the UUP politically, but that the UUP were nevertheless ready to talk to the Irish if they were ready to make serious change. Maginnis stressed UUP difficulties over policing, decommissioning and security. It was left that we would talk to the Irish again about the text. (By prior agreement with the Irish, we did not give the UUP the new Strand 2 text at this stage for fear of simply triggering further Unionist demands).

A frustrating period followed, with no real negotiation underway on the key fronts. Ahern did not get back from Dublin until the early evening. Until he had approved the Strand 2 text negotiated earlier, so that we could prove to the Unionists that the Irish really were up for serious change, the process was effectively stuck. When he eventually did arrive for a bilateral with the Prime Minister, the initial atmosphere was chilly, because the Irish mistakenly thought we had been trying to negotiate with Mitchell behind their back over policing and decommissioning. Apologies from the Prime Minister quickly restored relations, and Ahern confirmed he was ready to sign up to the paper on Strand 2, contingent on the Unionists being ready to do a reasonable deal on other issues, notably Strand 1.

This was followed by a crucial tripartite meeting with the Unionists. Ahern made clear he was ready to make compromises. Trimble appreciated Ahern's return to Belfast from his mother's funeral and suggested both sides' political needs could be met. In a critical intervention, Taylor said he thought that proper business could now be done. It was therefore agreed that the UUP and Irish should meet bilaterally to try to reach agreement on North/South. We subsequently gave the UUP the new text, suggesting that we thought the Irish would be ready to sign up to it.

The UUP and Irish eventually met late that evening, for a long and evidently tense discussion. It did not focus on the new text, as we had hoped, but on the difficult issues, in particular the Irish need for guarantees about the establishment of North-South implementation bodies and preference for Westminster legislation, and the UUP reluctance to contemplate anything "pre-cooked", before the Assembly could take a view. It was agreed that both sides would go away overnight to draft words to reflect their respective ideas. Some of the Irish side seemed encouraged by the meeting, but Ahern himself commented that it had finished just in time, before blows were exchanged. Andrews and Liz O'Donnell in particular had clearly taken a negative line – a problem which was to plague us further in the next 24 hours.

The Prime Minister was furious that the Irish and UUP had not been prepared to stay up all night to sort out the problems and agree a text. He feared that the delay would make things worse – a fear which proved amply justified the following morning. But Ahern was clearly too tired for an all-night session to be possible.

The end of the evening was marked by Gerry Adams wandering in to see the Prime Minister on his own. He was friendly and philosophical, as always, but his underlying message was worrying: Sinn Féin wanted to sign up to a deal, but we had to give them a deal they could sign up to – and this had to involve more than just prisoner release. The Prime Minister took the opportunity to ask Hume and Mallon immediately afterwards whether he thought Sinn Féin would sign up. They thought Adams genuinely wanted to. But this question was to be a constant preoccupation for the next 36 hours.

We eventually returned to Hillsborough after midnight, frustrated that so little progress had been made during the day. We had arranged to meet Ahern again for breakfast the following morning.

Transcript Source 27

Date: 13.04.1998

6 extracts from a report written by John Holmes, to Tony Blair on the final 72 days of negotiations – Wednesday 8 April, 1998, Catalogue ref, PREM 49/412

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Source 28: 5 extracts from final report: April 9

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412

Thursday 9 April

At breakfast with Ahern, the Irish went through the North-South problems again. They were angry that, having made concessions in negotiation with us the previous day, these had been set aside by the Unionists. Not for the first time, the Taoiseach revealed his extreme suspicion of Unionist intentions, based on nationalist experience of many years. He recalled Unionist failure to deliver on the North-South front in both 1921 and 1973. He was worried at the idea that he could change Articles 2 and 3, and then get nothing for it. There was consequently great stress on the Irish side on the need for Westminster legislation to ensure that the North-South bodies would definitely be established. The Irish also showed further concern about Sinn Fein's position.

The Prime Minister put the Unionist North-South proposal to Ahern, and pushed him hard. Ahern accepted that the basis of a deal was there, but repeated that Westminster legislation had to be part of this, even if the Assembly helped to draft the legislation. The Prime Minister saw no reason why we should not reintroduce the previous reference to the two governments making all necessary legislative and other preparations. After Teahon and Gallagher had studied the Unionist text in more detail, and suggested some more changes, the Irish

reluctantly agreed it, together (apparently) with the list of proposed subjects for co-operation/implementation bodies.

The Prime Minister then put the proposed Irish amendments to Trimble, who accepted the essential ones. So a deal appeared to have been struck on Strand 2, and a breakthrough achieved. Strand 1 negotiation could start in earnest, together with efforts to resolve the remaining textual problems over rights, policing, decommissioning, etc.

However problems soon appeared. Word began to reach us of serious difficulties about the new text in the Irish camp, fuelled by Andrews, O'Donnell and Mansergh, and unhappiness on the part of Sinn Fein and the SDLP. The Prime Minister explained at length to both parties why the new text was satisfactory from their point of view. The SDLP seemed reasonably convinced. Sinn Fein were not.

After a long period of silence from the Irish, during which the Prime Minister tried in vain to contact the Taoiseach,

It was a disaster – the Irish had altered the balance fundamentally, reintroducing the necessity for Westminster legislation throughout the text and putting all the responsibility in the hands of the two governments. There was fury on our side that the deal had so quickly fallen apart. The Prime Minister quickly told Ahern that the text could not be seriously reopened, but he was ready to see whether the UUP might accept one or two amendments. A difficult negotiation between me and Teahon/Gallagher followed. I agreed to try on the Prime Minister and, if he agreed, the UUP, half a dozen small but significant textual changes.

The Prime Minister met Trimble and Taylor, and put the Irish changes to them. Since they did not fundamentally alter the balance of the text, they accepted four of the six amendments, to our relief. The Irish were in turn satisfied. So the deal seemed to be back on, and attention could switch back to the wider problem of whether Sinn Fein would sign up to a deal, not least since Ahern had made increasingly clear that a deal would be almost impossible for the Irish if they did not. Ahern had already spent hours with Adams trying to persuade him that the deal was worth accepting, and listening to Sinn Fein demands for improvements, particularly on policing, security, the Irish language, and prisoners (whom they insisted all had to be out in a year). Dr Mowlam had also been engaged in tough negotiations over the latter point for two days, with us deliberately refusing to reveal our hand. Sinn Fein's public line had

meanwhile turned very negative and it looked as if they were preparing to disassociate themselves from any agreement.

However a series of meetings over the night of 9/10 April with Dr Mowlam; Ahern and the Prime Minister separately; two very long meetings with just the Prime Minister and Ahern on one side, and Adams and McGuinness on the other; and a 3 a.m. telephone call to Adams from Clinton, seemed to turn the tide. No concessions were made on Sinn Fein demands, but their concerns were listened to. Dr Mowlam wrote a letter of comfort on some of the issues. The Prime Minister promised to meet Adams after Easter to discuss them further. It eventually became clear early in the morning of 10 April that, while they would not sign up to the deal on the spot, not least because of their annual conference a week later, they were ready to make positive noises about it and argue for it. It was made clear in return that, while we would stick for now to the planned two year release deadline for prisoners, we would be ready to advance this if Sinn Fein did sign up and circumstances allowed.

Meanwhile the deal on Strand 2 had indeed unblocked Strand 1. The SDLP's patience was rewarded and the UUP accepted early on Friday morning the essence of what they had rejected for so long: a Northern Ireland executive, with a First Minister and First Deputy Minister, and a reasonable form of sufficient cross-community consensus for voting on key issues. Other pieces of the jigsaw had also fallen into place, with new words on decommissioning and policing agreed, and the UUP having finally accepted the Irish amendments to Articles 2 and 3 (despite having deluded themselves that a better offer was on the way).

Transcript Source 28

Date: 13.04.1998

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Source 29: 4 Extracts from final report: April 10 Pt.1

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412

Friday 10 April

All now looked set for agreement, and the early morning of Good Friday was spent tidying up texts for later circulation to the parties (most of whom had seen no new text since Monday and knew little of what had been going on); and preparing words for use if and when agreement was reached. Exhaustion was combined with a degree of satisfaction and optimism. But we were also uncomfortably aware that there was bound to be a last minute obstacle, and that the UUP would no doubt find reasons to dislike the texts when they saw them again.

Before they could even be circulated, a mini-crisis arose over the Annex listing the areas where separate or joint North-South implementation bodies

would be set up. The Irish had been unhappy with the number of areas on this list (12), together with the fact that few of them were what they wanted. They had pressed throughout for an Irish Language Promotion Body and a Trade Promotion and Indigenous Company Development Body. The UUP had resisted both fiercely, one on political grounds and the other because of competition worries.

The Irish claimed to have persuaded the UUP at some time during the night to accept both

We stupidly took their word for it. When the UUP saw the new list, they blew a fuse, accused the Irish of duplicity and refused to accept any more than the original list. The Irish in turn dug in their heels, and a lengthy impasse followed, with Mitchell unable to circulate a new text and getting increasingly angry. We were also tearing our hair out.

Eventually, the Prime Minister brought Ahern and Trimble together again. Trimble had been given fierce instructions by his colleagues not to accept another body, or not to bother coming back. He was adamant. Ahern pressed but in vain. Eventually Trimble, was persuaded to propose again a pretty meaningless health body. We sold this to an unhappy Ahern on the basis of an additional reference in the text to other bodies being considered, and an exchange of letters with Trimble where Ahern set out four Irish requests again, and Trimble agreed to consider them later.

This fudge allowed the text to be circulated around midday. We sat back and waited for the next problems. They were not long in arriving but were worse than we had anticipated. First the UUP insisted that the Anglo-Irish Secretariat at Maryfield be closed by the end of the year. But the Irish were resistant to further concessions to the UUP. Then the Unionists wanted to change the wording on decommissioning. We told them it was impossible.

But it quickly became clear that Trimble's troops were in general revolt, particularly his young staffers, but also major figures like Donaldson. Faced with the prospect of selling to their community a deal involving Sinn Féin at the Assembly and Government table with no guarantee of decommissioning, with all prisoners out in two years, at least severe doubts about the future of the RUC, a new relationship with Dublin, and a nationalist hold on major Assembly decisions, they were losing their nerve. The precise cause varied over the hours.

First, it was prisoners. We provided written comfort on how the scheme would work. Then it was policing. Then it was decommissioning.

The Prime Minister spoke to Trimble several times on the phone. He wrote to Trimble unilaterally agreeing that Maryfield would close by the end of the year. We enlisted David Montgomery. We deployed the big picture arguments we could. But Trimble still seemed to be losing the argument (and to share most of his colleagues' reservation). It began to look hopeless, and despair took hold.

8-
THIS IS A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Transcript Source 29

Date: 13.04.1998

4 Extracts from a report written by John Holmes, to Tony Blair on the final 72 days of negotiations – Friday 10 April (Part 1) Catalogue ref: PREM 49/412

All now looked set for agreement, and the early morning of Good Friday was spent tidying up texts for later circulation to the parties (most of whom had seen no new text since Monday and knew little of what had been going on); and preparing words for use if and when agreement was reached. Exhaustion was combined with a degree of satisfaction and optimism. But we were also uncomfortably aware that there was bound to be a last minute obstacle, and that the UUP would no doubt find reasons to dislike the texts when they saw them again.

Before they could even be circulated, a mini-crisis arose over the Annex listing the areas where separate or joint North-South implementation bodies would be set up. The Irish had been unhappy with the number of areas on this list (12), together with the fact that few of them were what they wanted. They had pressed throughout for an Irish Language Promotion Body and a Trade Promotion and Indigenous Company Development Body. The UUP had resisted both fiercely, one on political grounds and the other because of competition worries.

The Irish claimed to have persuaded the UUP at some time during the night to accept both. We stupidly took their word for it. When the UUP saw the new list, they blew a fuse, accused the Irish of duplicity and refused to accept any more than the original list. The Irish in turn dug in their heels, and a lengthy impasse followed, with Mitchell unable to circulate a new text and getting increasingly angry. We were also tearing our hair out.

Eventually, the Prime Minister brought Ahern and Trimble together again. Trimble had been given fierce instructions by his colleagues not to accept another body, or not to bother coming back. He was adamant. Ahern pressed but in was persuaded to propose again vain. Eventually Trimble, was persuaded to propose again a pretty meaningless health body. We sold this to an unhappy Ahern on the basis of an additional reference in the text to other bodies being considered, and an exchange of letters with Trimble where Ahern set out four Irish requests again, and Trimble agreed to consider them later.

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But it quickly became clear that Trimble's troops were in general revolt, particularly his young staffers, but also major figures like Donaldson. Faced with the prospect of selling to their community a deal involving Sinn Fein at the Assembly and Government table with no guarantee of decommissioning, with all prisoners out in two years, at least severe doubts about the future of the RUC, a new relationship with Dublin, and a nationalist hold on major Assembly decisions, they were losing their nerve. The precise cause varied over the hours. First, it was prisoners. We provided written comfort on how the scheme would work. Then it was policing. Then it was decommissioning.

Transcript Source 29

The Prime Minister spoke to Trimble several times on the phone. He wrote to Trimble unilaterally agreeing that Maryfield would close by the end of the year. We enlisted David Montgomery. We deployed the big picture arguments we could. But Trimble still seemed to be losing the argument (and to share most of his colleagues' reservation). It began to look hopeless, and despair took hold.

Source 30: 4 Extracts from final report: April 10 Pt.2

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412

Trimble eventually brought Taylor, Empey, Maginnis and Donaldson up to see the Prime Minister. All effectively said the text was unacceptable and unsaleable to Unionists. The Prime Minister let his despair show, but said he was ready to help if he could, but not by reopening the text itself. The delegation made clear that the single biggest issue was the prospect of sitting round the Cabinet table with Sinn Fein when there had been no decommissioning. The Prime Minister promised to consider this.

When they had left, we concocted a letter to Trimble making clear that, if after 6 months of the Assembly the present rules to promote non-violent methods had proved ineffective, we would support changing the rules to give them teeth. We sent this off without much hope, and meanwhile enlisted Clinton's help through a direct phone call to Trimble. The cause still looked all but hopeless, although Trimble had said one or two things which suggested he was determined to make his colleagues swallow the agreement. Meanwhile the other delegations were getting restive and suspicious that Mitchell had still not been able to call the expected plenary to ratify agreement; and the press outside, who had thought it was all over bar the shouting, were just beginning to get wind that we might be in serious trouble.

Suddenly, at about 1630, the picture changed again. Rumours reached us that, following the Prime Minister's letter, and Clinton's call, Trimble had taken renewed heart and called a vote, which he had narrowly won. This seemed too good to be true, but Trimble quickly rang to confirm that the way was now clear for the plenary to be held, and Mitchell arranged it for 1700.

The plenary itself was relatively devoid of drama. No-one pressed any amendments, though Adams insisted that a paper on Sinn Fein "Issues of Concern" be entered into the record. The vote was swift. All said yes except Adams, who said he was "very positive" about the text but would have to consult his Annual Conference first. Trimble said he would have to consult his Executive Committee and full Executive Council, but was voting yes anyway. And that was it. There was no applause when sufficient consensus was achieved - just a stunned silence.

After votes of thanks from all parties to Mitchell and his co-chairmen, the Prime Minister and Ahern rushed out to make their planned statements to the waiting media, while Mitchell held a ceremonial closing meeting to allow all the participants to say their piece. Immediately after the press conference, we left for London, completely drained by the roller-coaster nightmare of the previous three days and scarcely able to believe what had happened.

Transcript Source 30

Date: 13.04.1998

4 Extracts from a report written by John Holmes, to Tony Blair on the final 72 days of negotiations – Friday 10 (Part 2) Catalogue ref: PREM 49/412

Trimble eventually brought Taylor, Empey, Maginnis and Donaldson up to see the Prime Minister. All effectively said the text was unacceptable and unsaleable to Unionists. The Prime Minister let his despair show, but said he was ready to help if he could, but not by reopening the text itself. The delegation made clear that the single biggest issue was the prospect of sitting round the Cabinet table with Sinn Fein when there had been no decommissioning. The Prime Minister promised to consider this.

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Source 31: Statement from Mo Mowlam Secretary of State

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412

This agreement was made possible by the efforts of many people - most of all by the leaders of the political parties involved in the negotiations.

The House will I am sure wish to join me in also paying tribute to them and to the exceptional chairmanship skills of Senator George Mitchell and his fellow independent Chairmen, former Prime Minister Harri Holkeri and General John de Chastelain.

The patience, impartiality and the personal authority which Senator Mitchell showed over the months of difficult and tense negotiation were a major factor in the success of these talks.

No less crucial was the constant support and the direct involvement of my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister, particularly over the last few days of the negotiations.

The final 36 hours saw him engaged in a virtually non-stop round of intensive negotiations which were among the toughest of the whole process.

His efforts were matched by those of the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, who rose above the personal tragedy of his mother's death, to play an equally decisive role in the final intensive days of negotiation.

Hon Members will also appreciate the enormous value of having a broad political consensus in support of the talks process, both here at Westminster and in the Irish Parliament.

Transcript Source 31

Date: 20.04.1998

Extract from a statement by the UK Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Dr Mo Mowlam in April 1998, Catalogue ref: PREM 49/412

This agreement was made possible by the efforts of many people – most of all by the leaders of the political parties involved in the negotiations.

The House will I am sure wish to join me in also paying tribute to them and to the exceptional chairmanship skills of Senator George Mitchell and his fellow independent Chairmen, former Prime Minister Harri Holkeri and General John de Chastelain.

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Hon Members will also appreciate the enormous value of having a broad political consensus in support of the talks process, both here at Westminster and in the Irish Parliament.

Source 32: Bertie Ahern speech on Approval Agreement 10 April 1998

Catalogue Ref: National Archive of Ireland: TAOIS/2021/100/08 1998-04-22

Assessment of Agreement

I am laying before the House a settlement for peace in Northern Ireland. The political agreement concluded between all the participating parties on Good Friday, 10 April represents a major breakthrough in terms of consolidating peace and ending 30 years of conflict. The Agreement is historic in the true sense of the word. It not only supersedes previous initiatives, but it replaces both the legislation and the settlement of 1920 and 1921. In its place is an agreement capable for the first time of winning the support of both traditions in the North, and the support of North and South, as well as enhancing co-operation throughout these islands.

It is the culmination of many years' effort devoted to the peace process and of the three strand talks which began in 1991. Both have come together in one agreement. Many people have contributed to this achievement and shown real statesmanship. I would like to salute the political courage and leadership shown by John Hume and Gerry Adams and their close colleagues, also the priests who brought parties together. The Ulster Unionist leadership under David Trimble have made an indispensable and courageous contribution by their participation in negotiating and concluding this Agreement. Dr. John Alderdice of Alliance, the Loyalist leaders, the Women's Coalition and Labour in Northern Ireland also played a valuable role in supporting accommodation and bridging difference. The commitment of the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who put his full weight and presence behind the negotiations, was obviously of huge importance, as was the courage and perseverance of his Secretary of State Mo Mowlam, and her Deputy, Paul Murphy. I would also like to pay tribute to the essential groundwork of his predecessor John Major. I would like to pay tribute to my predecessors, Charles Haughey, who was Taoiseach when the process started, Albert Reynolds who concluded the Downing Street Declaration, and who made the first historic breakthrough towards ending violence, Deputy John Bruton who helped set the parameters and ground rules that started the talks in their most recent phase since June 1996, and Deputy Dick Spring who under successive Governments oversaw the preparation of the immensely valuable Framework Document, and Minister

Andrews, as well as Minister Liz O'Donnell, deserve our warmest thanks for the leadership they gave the Irish Government team in the talks, as do the other Ministers and Ministers of State who attended on a regular basis since 1996. The Attorney-General, David Byrne provided a vital input into key parts of the Agreement. The inter-departmental team of officials and advisers also deserve our gratitude for helping to pull the Strands of the Agreement together, as indeed do the officials attached to the British side and to the different party teams as well as the staff working with the Talks Chairmen. I would like to congratulate Senator George Mitchell and his colleagues, former Prime Minister Harri Holkeri and General John de Chastelain on their great achievement, and thank them for their wisdom and patience.

Transcript Source 32

Date: 22.04.1998

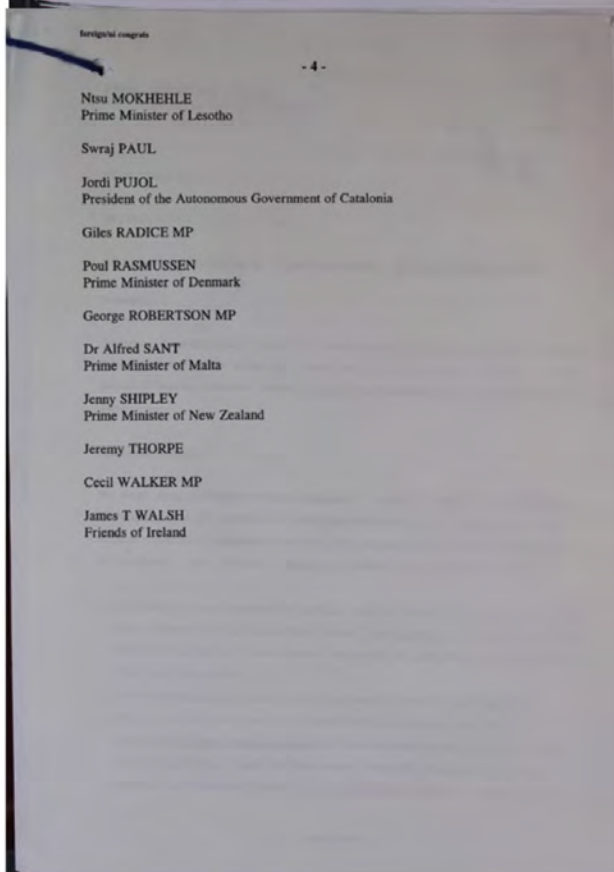
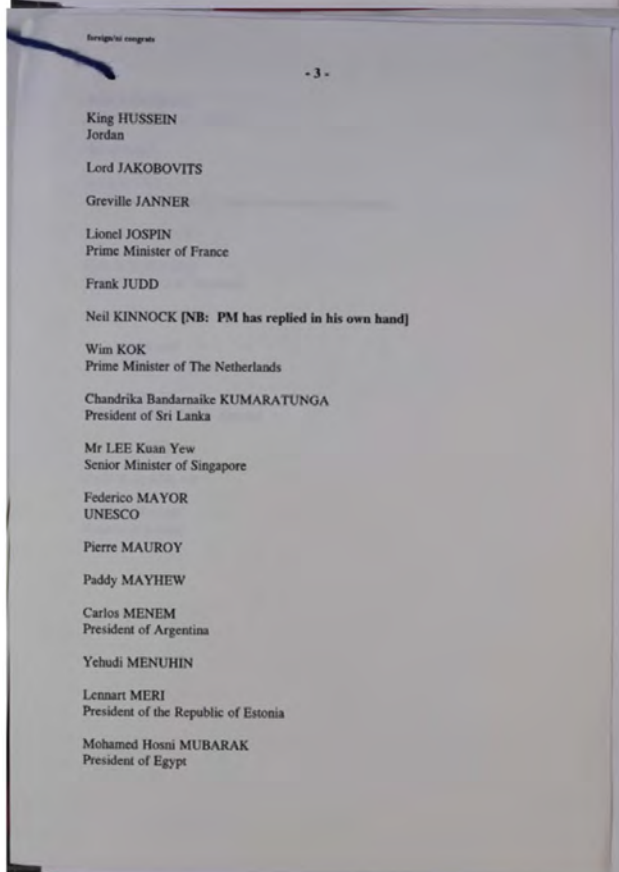
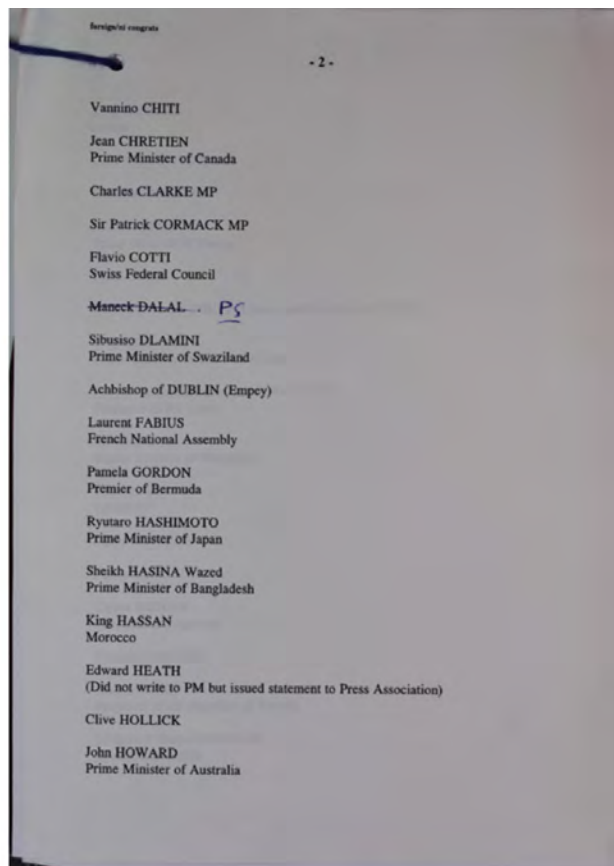
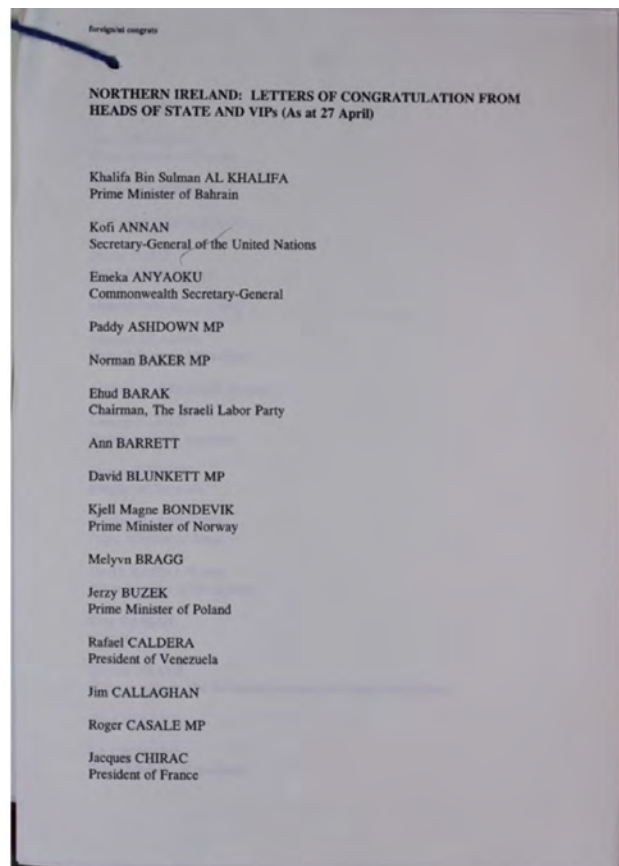
The text of a speech by the Taoiseach Mr. Bertie Ahern, TD on the Approval of the Multi-Party Agreement in Belfast on Good Friday, 10 April 1998. The speech was delivered on 22 April 1998. National Archive of Ireland: TAOIS/2021/100/08 1998-04-22

Assessment of Agreement

I am laying before the House a settlement for peace in Northern Ireland. The political agreement concluded between all the participating parties on Good Friday, 10 April represents a major breakthrough in terms of consolidating peace and ending 30 years of conflict. The Agreement is historic in the true sense of the word. It not only supersedes previous initiatives, but it replaces both the legislation and the settlement of 1920 and 1921. In its place is an agreement capable for the first time of winning the support of both traditions in the North, and the support of North and South, as well as enhancing co-operation throughout these islands. It is the culmination of many years' effort devoted to the peace process and of the three strand talks which began in 1991. Both have come together in one agreement. Many people have contributed to this achievement and shown real statesmanship. I would like to salute the political courage and leadership shown by John Hume and Gerry Adams and their close colleagues, also the priests who brought parties together. The Ulster Unionist leadership under David Trimble have made an indispensable and courageous contribution by their participation in negotiating and concluding this Agreement. Dr. John Alderdice of Alliance, the Loyalist leaders, the Women's Coalition and Labour in Northern Ireland also played a valuable role in supporting accommodation and bridging-difference. The commitment of the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who put his full-weight and presence behind the negotiations, was obviously of huge importance, as was the courage and perseverance of his Secretary of State Mo Mowlam, and her Deputy, Paul Murphy. I would also like to pay tribute to the essential groundwork of his predecessor John Major. I would like to pay tribute to my predecessors, Charles Haughey, who was Taoiseach when the process started, Albert Reynolds who concluded the Downing Street Declaration, and who made the first historic breakthrough towards ending violence, Deputy John Bruton who helped set the parameters and ground rules that started the talks in their most recent phase since June 1996, and Deputy Dick Spring who under successive Governments oversaw the preparation of the immensely valuable Framework Document, and Minister Andrews, as well as Minister Liz O'Donnell, deserve our warmest thanks for the leadership they gave the Irish Government team in the talks, as do the other Ministers and Ministers of State who attended on a regular basis since 1996. The Attorney-General, David Byrne provided a vital input into key parts of the Agreement. The inter-departmental team of officials and advisers also deserve our gratitude for helping to pull the Strands of the Agreement together, as indeed do the officials attached to the British side and to the different party teams as well as the staff working with the Talks Chairmen. I would like to congratulate Senator George Mitchell and his colleagues, former Prime Minister Harri Holkeri and General John de Chastelain on their great achievement and thank them for their wisdom and patience.

Source 33: Letters of congratulation received for the Agreement 1998

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412



Transcript Source 33

Date: 27.04.1998

A list of head of state and other politicians who sent letters of congratulations to Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister, on the signing of the Agreement, April 1998, Catalogue ref: PREM 49/412

NORTHERN IRELAND: LETTERS OF CONGRATULATIONS FROM HEADS OF STATE AND VIPs (As at 27 April)

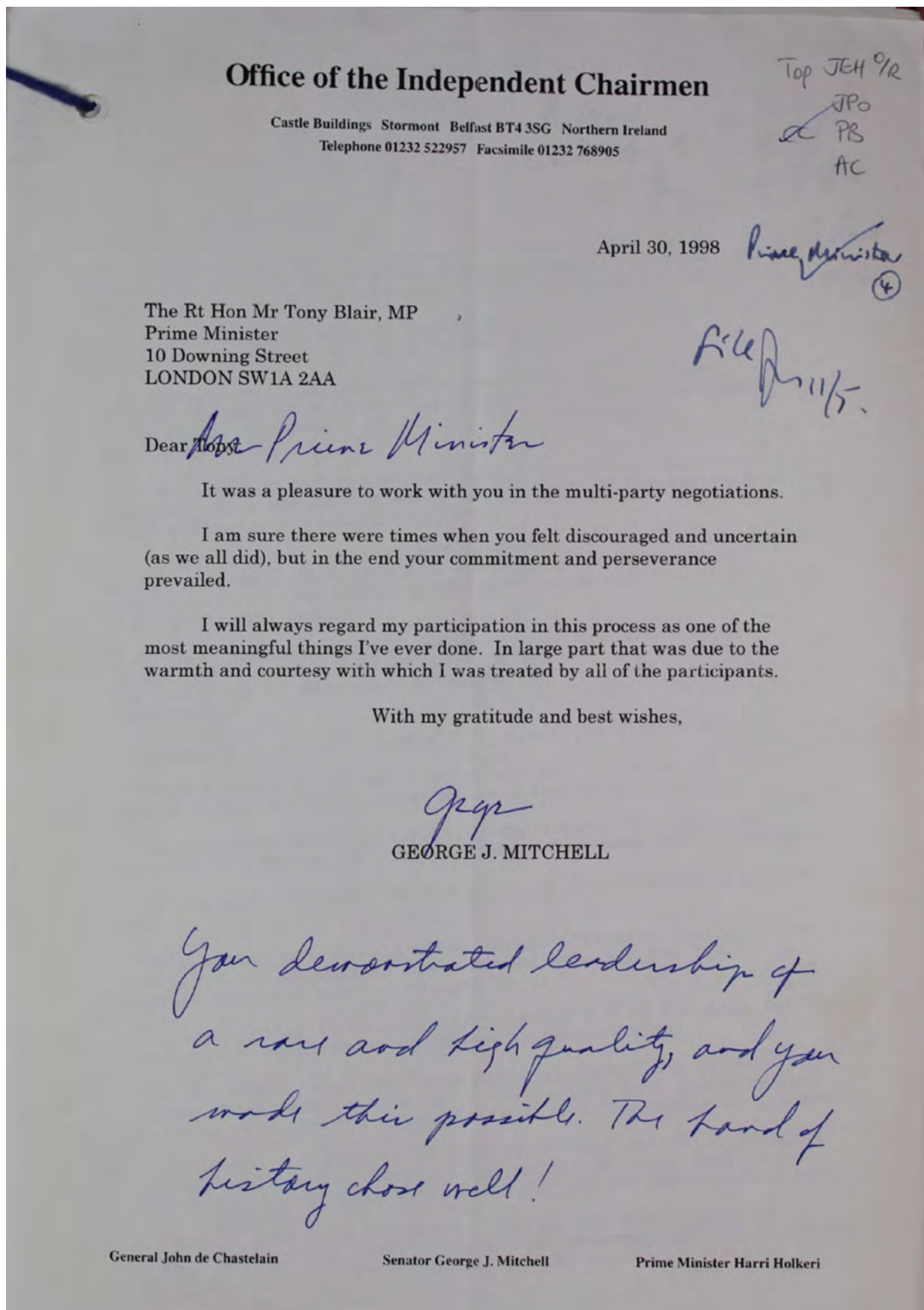
- Khalifa Bin Sulman AL KHALIFA
Prime Minister of Bahrain
- Kofi ANNAN
Secretary General of the United Nations
- Emeka ANYAOKU
Commonwealth Secretary-General
- Paddy ASHDOWN MP
- Norman BAKER MP
- Ehud BARAK
Chairman, The Israeli Labor Party
- Ann BARRETT
- David BLUNKETT MP
- Kjell Magne BONDEVIK
Prime Minister of Norway
- Melvyn BRAGG
- Jerzy BUZEK
Prime Minister of Poland
- Rafael CALDERA
President of Venezuela
- Jim CALLAGHAN
- Roger CASALE MP
- Jacques CHIRAC
President of France
- Vannino CHITI
- Jean CHRETIEN
Prime Minister of Canada
- Charles CLARKE MP
- Sir Patrick CORMACK MP
- Flavio COTTI
Swiss Federal Council
- Maneck DALAL [PS]
- Sibusiso DLAMINI
Prime Minister of Switzerland

- Archbishop of DUBLIN (Empey)
- Laurent FABIUS
French National Assembly
- Pamela GORDON
Premier of Bermuda
- Ryutaro HASHIMOTO
Prime Minister of Japan
- Sheikh HASINA Wazed
Prime Minister of Bangladesh
- King HASSAN
Morocco
- Edward HEATH
(Did not write to PM but issued statement to Press Association)
- Clive HOLLICK
- John HOWARD
Prime Minister of Australia
- King HUSSEIN
Jordan
- Lord JAKOBOVITS
- Greville JANNER
- Lionel JOSPIN
Prime Minister of France
- Frank JUDD
- Neil KINNOCK [NB: PM had replied in his own hand]
- Wim KOK
Prime Minister of The Netherlands
- Chandrika Bandarnaike KUMARATUNGA
President of Sri Lanka
- Mr LEE Kuan Yew
Senior Minister of Singapore
- Frederico MAYOR
UNESCO

- Pierre MAUROY
- Paddy MAYHEW
- Carlos MENEM
President of Argentina
- Yehudi MENUHIN
- Lennart MERI
President of the Republic of Estonia
- Mohamed Hosni MUBARAK
President of Egypt
- Ntsu MOKHEHLE
Prime Minister of Lesotho
- Swraj PAUL
- Jordi PUJOL
President of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia
- Giles RADICE MP
- Poul RASMUSSEN
Prime Minister of Denmark
- George Robertson MP
- Dr Alfred SANT
Prime Minister of Malta
- Jenny SHIPLEY
Prime Minister of New Zealand
- Jeremy THORPE
- Cecil WALKER MP
- James T WALSH
Friends of Ireland

Source 34: U.S. Senator George Mitchell writes to PM Tony Blair

Catalogue Ref: PREM 49/412



Transcript Source 34

Date: 30.04.1998

A letter from US Senator George Mitchell to UK Prime Minister Tony Blair on 30 April 1998, soon after the signing of the Agreement, Catalogue ref: PREM 49/412

Office of the Independent Chairmen
Castle Buildings Stormont Belfast BT4 3SG Northern Ireland
Telephone 01232 522957 Facsimile 01232 768905

April 30, 1998

The Rt Hon Mr Tony Blair, MP

Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

LONDON SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

It was a pleasure to work with you in the multi-party negotiations.

I am sure there were times when you felt discouraged and uncertain (as we all did), but in the end your commitment and perseverance prevailed.

I will always regard my participation in this process as one of the most meaningful things I've ever done. In large part that was due to the warmth and courtesy with which I was treated by all of the participants.

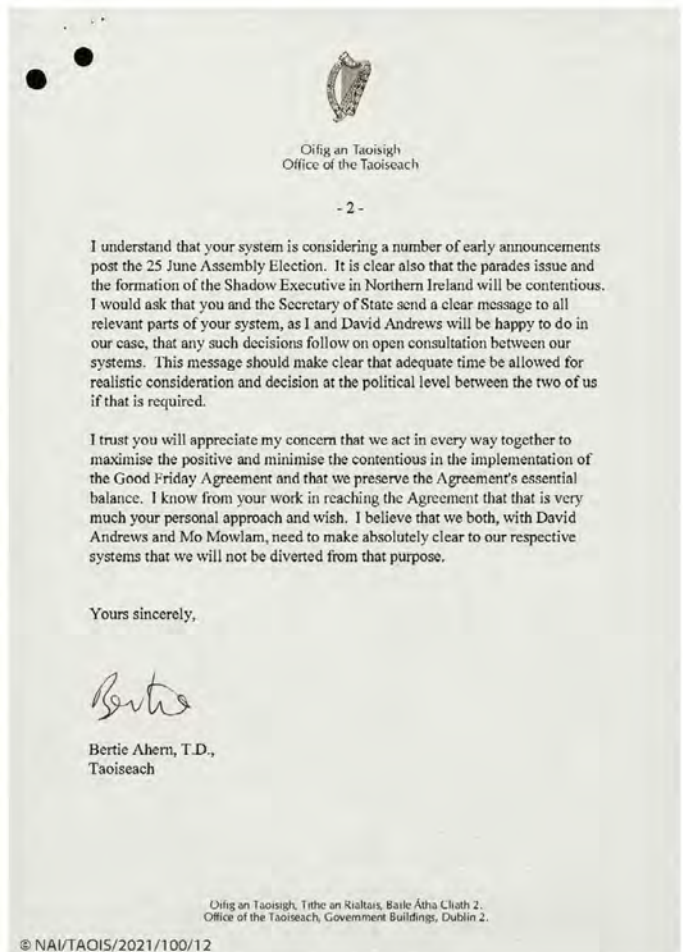
With my gratitude and best wishes,

GEORGE J. MITCHELL

You demonstrated leadership of a rare and high quality, and you made this possible. The hand of history chose well!

Source 35: Tony Blair P.M. letter from Taoiseach Bertie Ahern

Catalogue Ref: National Archive of Ireland: TAOIS/2021/100/12 1998-06-10



Transcript Source 35

Date: 10.06.1998

A letter from the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern to the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, 10 June 1998,
National Archive of Ireland: TAOIS/2021/100/12 1998-06-10

Oifig an Taoisigh

Office of the Taoiseach

10 June, 1998

The Right Honourable Tony Blair, M.P.,

Prime Minister,

10 Downing Street,

London.

Dear Tony,

I am writing to express my serious concern at the decisions taken on the Policing Commission and the Prisons Bill and in particular at the manner in which those decisions were taken.

Coupled with the leak of the Secretary of State's conversations about the Policing Commission they have created a real sense of alarm amongst Nationalists that some people in the system are attempting to claw back parts of the Good Friday Agreement with which they do not agree.

At this stage my principal concern is not to go over the past but to ensure that future decisions concerning the Agreement are reached after open discussion between us which reach a clear and agreed understanding of what each side will do. We can draw lessons from the Police Commission which caused unnecessary problems between us, damaged confidence in the balanced implementation of the Agreement and inflicted unnecessary discomfort on those who were willing to accept membership. All this could have been avoided had we sat down at an early stage, discussed possible names and reached agreement on the membership.

Likewise an early discussion of the Prisons Bill would have allowed me to put at that stage my strong view that the approach adopted in the Bill, of redefining what constitutes a ceasefire and of seeking to specify terrorist organisations may be storing up real problems.

I understand that your system is considering a number of early announcements post the 25 June Assembly Election. It is clear also that the parades issue and the formation of the Shadow Executive in Northern Ireland will be contentious. I would ask that you and the Secretary of State send a clear message to all relevant parts of your system, as I and David Andrews will be happy to do in our case, that any such decisions follow on open consultation between our systems.

This message should make clear that adequate time be allowed for realistic consideration and decision at the political level between the two of us if that is required.

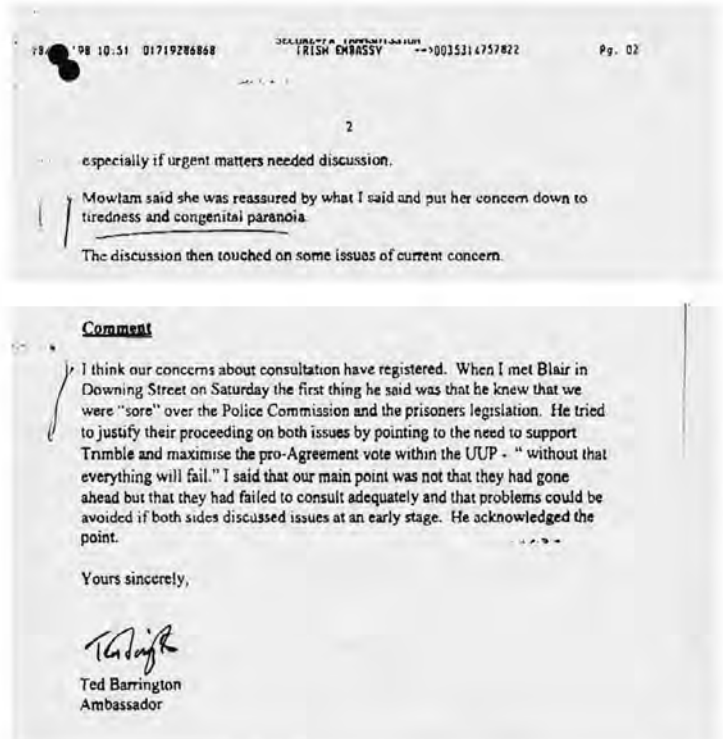
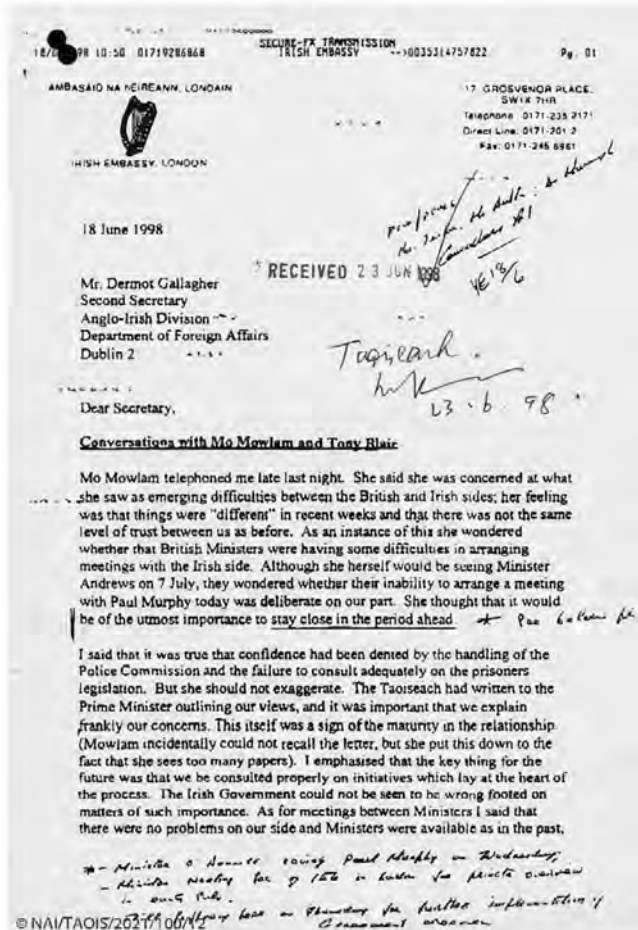
I trust you will appreciate my concern that we act in every way together to maximise the positive and minimise the contentious in the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and that we preserve the Agreement's essential balance. I know from your work in reaching the Agreement that that is very much your personal approach and wish. I believe that we both, with David Andrews and Mo Mowlam, need to make absolutely clear to our respective systems that we will not be diverted from that purpose.

Yours sincerely,

Bertie Ahern, T.D., Taoiseach

Source 36: Letter from Irish Ambassador

Catalogue Ref: National Archive of Ireland: TAOIS/2021/100/12 1998-06-17



Transcript Source 36

Date: 18.06.1998

Extracts from a letter from the Irish Ambassador in London to Dermot Gallagher, a senior official in the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland June 1998, National Archive of Ireland: TAOIS/2021/100/12 1998-06-17

AMBASAD NA hEIREANN. LONDAIN
IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

17 Grosvenor Place

SW1X 7HR

18 June 1998

Mr. Dermot Gallagher

Second Secretary

Anglo-Irish Division

Department of Foreign Affairs

Dublin 2

Dear Secretary,

Conversations with Mo Mowlam and Tony Blair

Mo Mowlam telephoned me late last night. She said she was concerned at what she saw as emerging difficulties between the British and Irish sides; her feeling was that things were "different" in recent weeks and that there was not the same level of trust between us as before. As an instance of this she wondered whether that British Ministers were having some difficulties in arranging meetings with the Irish side. Although she herself would be seeing Minister Andrews on 7 July, they wondered whether their inability to arrange a meeting with Paul Murphy today was deliberate on our part. She thought that it would be of the utmost importance to stay close in the period ahead.

I said that it was true that confidence had been dented by the handling of the Police Commission and the failure to consult adequately on the prisoners legislation. But she should not exaggerate. The Taoiseach had written to the Prime Minister outlining our views, and it was important that we explain frankly our concerns. This itself was a sign of the maturity in the relationship. (Mowlam incidentally could not recall the letter, but she put this down to the fact that she sees too many papers). I emphasised that the key thing for the future was that we be consulted properly on initiatives which lay at the heart of the process. The Irish Government could not be seen to be wrong footed on matters of such importance. As for meetings between Ministers I said that there were no problems on our side and Ministers were available as in the past, especially if urgent matters needed discussion. Mowlam said she was reassured by what I said and put her concern down to tiredness and congenital paranoia.

The discussion then touched on some issues of current concern.

Comment

I think our concerns about consultation have registered. When I met Blair in Downing Street on Saturday the first thing he said was that he knew that we were "sore" over the Police Commission and the prisoners legislation. He tried to justify their proceeding on both issues by pointing to the need to support Trimble and maximise the pro-Agreement vote within the UUP – "without that everything will fail." I said that our main point was not that they had gone ahead but that they had failed to consult adequately and that problems could be avoided if both sides discussed issues at an early stage. He acknowledged the point.

Yours sincerely,

Ted Barrington Ambassador

Source 37: Taoiseach report to Secretary of State Ireland

Catalogue Ref: National Archives of Ireland, TAOIS_2021_100_16 1998-09-23

3. Turning to his meeting the previous evening with David Trimble, the Taoiseach said that Mr Trimble had made clear to him that his room to manoeuvre was very limited. He needed "something". He understood the argument about the text of the Agreement (not explicitly linking decommissioning to formation of the Shadow Executive), but it could equally be argued that such linkage was not ruled out. In any case, he was now stuck with the realities of the position in which he found himself. The Taoiseach commented to Dr Mowlam that there was no doubting the scale of Mr Trimble's political difficulties - as exemplified by the fact that there were parts of his constituency, previously strongholds of his, which he could now only visit with the protection of the RUC.

13. Dr Mowlam spoke warmly of the meeting of the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body which she had just attended in York. She noted that after an initial exchange on the current political situation, most of the day was devoted to "routine" matters, such as Agriculture, Education etc. She found this very heartening. The Taoiseach said that he had mentioned the Body to David Trimble at their meeting. The latter had agreed that we were in a new situation and that the Interparliamentary dimensions of the new institutions would also have to be developed.

Transcript Source 37

Date: 23.09.1998

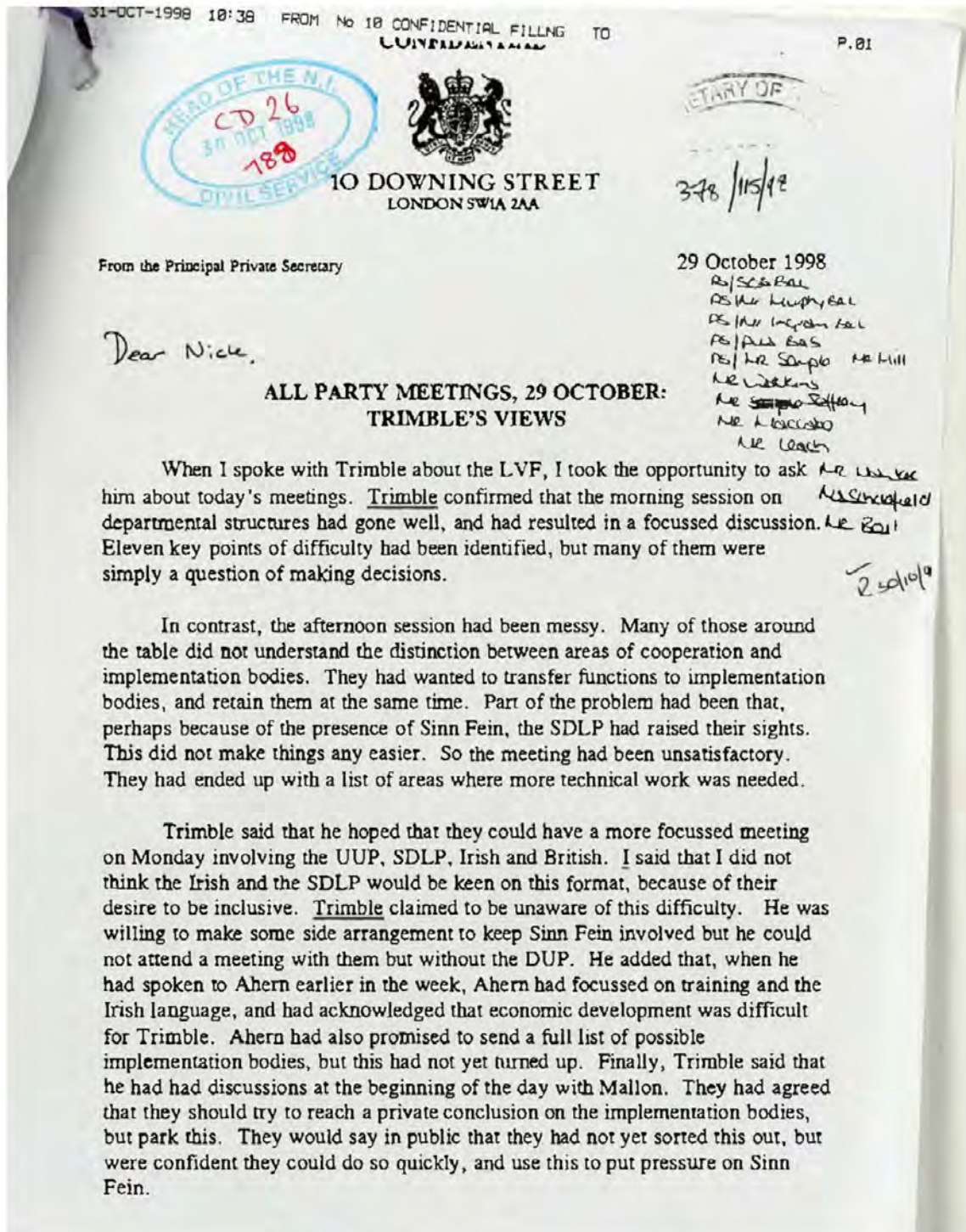
Extract from a report of a meeting between the Taoiseach and the UK Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in September 1998, National Archives of Ireland, TAOIS_2021_100_16
1998-09-23

3 Turning to his meeting the previous evening with David Trimble, the Taoiseach said that Mr Trimble had made clear to him that his room to manoeuvre was very limited. He needed "something". He understood the argument about the text of the Agreement (not explicitly linking decommissioning to formation of the Shadow Executive), but it could equally be argued that such linkage was not ruled out. In any case, he was now stuck with the realities of the position in which he found himself. The Taoiseach commented to Dr Mowlam that there was no doubting the scale of Mr Trimble's political difficulties – as exemplified by the fact that there were parts of his constituency, previously strongholds of his, which he could now only visit with the protection of the RUC.

13 Dr Mowlam spoke warmly of the meeting of the British-Irish Interparliamentary Body which she had just attended in York. She noted that after an initial exchange on the current political situation, most of the day was devoted to "routine" matters, such as Agriculture, Education etc. She found this very heartening. The Taoiseach said that he had mentioned the Body to David Trimble at their meeting. The latter had agreed that we were in a new situation and that the Interparliamentary dimensions of the new institutions would also have to be developed.

Source 38: UK government letter to Northern Ireland Office

Catalogue Ref: Public Record Office Northern Ireland CENT/3/268A 1998-10-29



Comment

We clearly need to work hard on Trimble to take a more positive line on North/South, and get across that the quadripartite meeting he has in mind poses huge difficulties for the Irish and the SDLP, if Sinn Fein are not there. I will try to get the Prime Minister to speak to him about this, probably over the weekend, and to encourage further all party meetings on North/South issues, or at least some alternative process to the same effect.

Transcript Source 38

Date: 29.10.1998

Extracts from a letter between the UK Prime Minister's Office and the Northern Ireland Office, October 1998. Public Record Office Northern Ireland CENT/3/268A 1998-10-29

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

29 October 1998

PS/SCSBAL

PS/Mr Murphy Bal

PS/ Mr Ingram BAL

PS/All Bas

PS/Mr Semple Mr Hill

Mar Watkins

Mr Jeffrey

Mr McCabe

Mr Leach

Mr Walker

Mr Scholfield

Mr Bell

Dear Nick

ALL PARTY MEETINGS, 29 OCTOBER:

TRIMBLE'S VIEWS

When I spoke with Trimble about the LVF, I took the opportunity to ask him about today's meetings. Trimble confirmed that the morning session on departmental structures had gone well, and had resulted in a focussed discussion. Eleven key points of difficulty had been identified, but many of them were simply a question of making decisions. In contrast, the afternoon session had been messy. Many of those around the table did not understand the distinction between areas of cooperation and implementation bodies. They had wanted to transfer functions to implementation bodies, and retain them at the same time. Part of the problem had been that, perhaps because of the presence of Sinn Fein, the SDLP had raised their sights. This did not make things any easier. So the meeting had been unsatisfactory. They had ended up with a list of areas where more technical work was needed.

Trimble said that he hoped that they could have a more focussed meeting on Monday involving the UUP, SDLP, Irish and British. I said that I did not think the Irish and the SDLP would be keen on this format, because of their desire to be inclusive. Trimble claimed to be unaware of this difficulty. He was willing to make some side arrangement to keep Sinn Fein involved but he could not attend a meeting with them but without the DUP. He added that, when he had spoken to Ahern earlier in the week, Ahern had focussed on training and the Irish language, and had acknowledged that economic development was difficult for Trimble. Ahern had also promised to send a full list of possible implementation bodies, but this had not yet turned up.

Transcript Source 38

Finally, Trimble said that he had had discussions at the beginning of the day with Mallon. They had agreed that they should try to reach a private conclusion on the implementation bodies, but park this. They would say in public that they had not yet sorted this out, but were confident they could do so quickly, and use this to put pressure on Sinn Fein.

Comment

We clearly need to work hard on Trimble to take a more positive line on North/South, and get across that the quadripartite meeting he has in mind poses huge difficulties for the Irish and the SDLP, if Sinn Fein are not there. I will try to get the Prime Minister to speak to him about this, probably over the weekend, and to encourage further all party meetings on North/South issues, or at least some alternative process to the same effect.

Source 39: Meeting cross border bodies

Catalogue Ref: Public Record Office Northern Ireland, CENT/3/236A 1998-11-24

FROM: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
11 MILLBANK
LONDON
SW1P 4QE

John Holmes Esq
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 0AA

24 November 1998

Dear John,

NORTH/SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION BODIES

State of Play as at 4pm on 24 November

This note sets out the latest position on north-south bodies.

Good meeting between Trimble and Mallon on Monday, following up good meeting in Dublin on Friday. UUP and SDLP officials tasked to work on remaining areas of disagreement.

Irish paper on implementation bodies rewritten to take account of (most of) Friday's discussion, cleared with the SDLP and Sinn Fein yesterday and presented to UUP officials this morning.

Close to agreement

Inland Waterways; Food Safety; Language; Strategic Transport Planning; Aquaculture and Marine Matters; Tourism (latest Irish paper neatly addresses Trimble's concerns)

Transcript Source 39

Date: 24.11.1998

Extract from a note by a UK government official on a meeting about cross-border bodies
November 1998, Public Record Office Northern Ireland, CENT/3/236A 1998-11-24

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

11 MILLBANK

LONDON

SW1P4QE

John Holmes Esq

Private Secretary to the Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

London

SW1A 0AA

24 November 1998

Dear John

NORTH/SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION BODIES

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