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CC	PS/SOS (B&L)	M
	PS/Lord Gowrie (B&L)	M
	PS/Mr Butler (B&L)	M
	PS/Mr Woodfield (B&L)	M
	PS/Sir Ewart Bell	
	Mr Marshall	M
	Mr Belloch	
	Mr Buxton	
	Mr Wyatt	
	Mr Doyne Ditmas	
	Mr Gilliland	
	Mr Blatherwick	
	Mr Angel	M
	Mr Harrington	M
	Mr Abbott	M
	Mr Shepherd	M
	Miss Christopherson	M

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① Sir Ewart
 ② POL

MEETING WITH US CONSUL GENERAL, STORMONT CASTLE, 19 MAY 1982

Present:

Secretary of State	Mr Michaud
Mr Boys Smith	

Mr Michaud called at his own request. He raised a number of points about industrial affairs in Northern Ireland which are recorded separately.

2. Visit of Friends of Ireland to Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State assured Mr Michaud that the Northern Ireland Office would make every effort to ensure, in co-operation with him, that the forthcoming visit of Mr Foley and his colleagues was as worthwhile as possible. For his part, the Secretary of State attached very considerable importance to the visit.

3. Secretary of State's Visit to the USA

The Secretary of State said that it would not now be possible, or valuable, for him to visit the USA whilst the Falklands Islands dispute remained unsettled and while the Bill was still in the House of Commons. This suggested that he would not be able to come before the last week of June or, in his view more probably, in the second part of July after the Congressional break for Independence Day. He remained however very anxious to make the visit at the earliest profitable moment.

4. Irish National Caucus

Mr Michaud drew the Secretary of State's attention to a report that day in the Irish News that the Irish National Caucus was seeking to arrange a Congressional letter to Mr Haig inviting him to put pressure on the UK

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Government to proscribe the UDA. He had no information at the moment as to whether the Caucus was likely to be able to arrange such a letter. He noted that the Secretary of State remained of the view that the UDA should not be proscribed at the present time.

5. Northern Ireland Bill

The Secretary of State outlined to Mr Michaud the nature of the Parliamentary opposition to the Bill. He said there was no doubt that the Bill would be passed into law, if need be with the help of a guillotine. He believed that a growing awareness of the Government's determination to pass the Bill would help ease the situation in the House of Commons. The Secretary of State suspected that support at grass roots level in Northern Ireland for his proposals was a good deal stronger than might be apparent from the reaction of politicians, and he thought that there was also a considerable divergence of view within the parties. He thought that elections for the Assembly were likely to be held in October, although he could not commit himself to timing at the moment.

6. In response to questions from Mr Michaud the Secretary of State made the following further points:

(i) the main issue in the Parliamentary Debates would be the 70% weighted majority. The Government would consider whether it could remove some of the objections to this provision by strengthening the requirements for cross-community support in the Bill. The Labour party and others also were unhappy that the presiding officer should be elected on a simple majority. During the course of the Committee Stage the Government would seek to secure from Dr Paisley and other Unionist leaders an understanding that the presiding officer had to be somebody capable of winning the respect of the Assembly as a whole;

(ii) he did not want the SDLP to break up, but if the party decided not to fight the elections it would be very difficult to help it;

(iii) the Secretary of State noted that Mr Castle had told Mr Michaud that he would be standing for election to the Assembly;

(iv) the Secretary of State noted that Mr Michaud, when he met Mr Hume shortly, would be glad to have in mind points of concern to the Secretary of State which he might put to Mr Hume. The Secretary of State believed Mr Hume was unfair in suggesting that the Government had let him down, although he acknowledged the SDLP had been placed under some pressure by the publication of the White Paper Bill. The Government had sought to help Mr Hume and would continue to do so. It will be helpful if Mr Hume understood this, together with the Government's determination to pass the Bill to law, and the Secretary of State's hope that relations between him and Mr Hume would improve;

(v) the Secretary of State was glad to note that the Friends of Ireland, who had hitherto tended to look to Mr Hume for opinions on Northern Ireland, were increasingly paying regard to Mr McCusker.

7. Anglo-Irish Relations

In response to questions from Mr Michaud, the Secretary of State said that he did not believe the appointment of Mr Mallon and Mr Robb to the Senate was in itself critical, although it was another example of Mr Haughey's mischievous behaviour. In the Secretary of State's view, Mr Haughey had conducted himself outrageously in recent weeks over the Government's proposals for Northern Ireland and over the Falkland Islands. But, although it might be tempting publicly to criticise Mr Haughey, nothing should be done which placed in jeopardy the present very satisfactory level of security co-operation. Mr Haughey probably realised that the establishment of a successful Assembly and devolved government in Northern Ireland would hinder the objectives to which he aspired, but Mr Haughey would not be allowed to obstruct the Government's plans. He hoped very much that in due course it would be possible to restore Anglo-Irish relations, and for him to establish a good personal relationship with Mr Haughey. But this could not be done until the Falklands crisis had been settled and the Bill had passed through the House of Commons; at that stage it might be valuable for him to visit Mr Haughey, but he could not do so at present.

Rosemary Cunn

for S W BOYS SMITH
Private Secretary

19 May 1982

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