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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

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To: SECRET

From:

Mr. John Hume, who was in Dublin for the weekend, asked me to come and meet him at his hotel last night.

In the course of the discussion, he said that he was increasingly persuaded of the merit, in strategic terms, of the Taoiseach's initiative. He was pleased that it was increasingly understood in the British media that the initiative, to succeed, would require a significant British response. He had said as much to journalists himself without attributing the view to the Government here.

I asked him what he felt the Government should seek from the British by way of response. He felt that some movement on the British long-term commitment to Northern Ireland should be sought. The argument might be presented in terms of the necessity that each protagonist to the crisis should re-examine and be prepared to revise his own position e.g. this is what the Irish Government is publicly engaged in doing. Similarly, the British should take a corresponding initiative.

Hume felt that a strengthening of the British formula at Sunningdale would be a very satisfactory outcome to the Taoiseach's meeting with Mrs. Thatcher. By strengthening he meant a reformulation in terms such as: H.M.G. favours movement in the direction of Irish unity (closer political relations between North and South?) but acknowledges that any such movement can only take place with the consent of a majority in Northern Ireland. He felt that, to secure such a development, one would have to suggest a somewhat stronger formula for negotiating purposes.

M.L.
M.Lillis.

12th October, 1981.

c.c. Taoiseach, Professor Dooge, Special Adviser, Mr. Nally,
Mr. David NeXigan (Department of Foreign Affairs).

Attorney-General.

W. O'Riordan

Please file

(Signature)