

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND

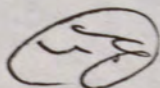


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- (d) Mr. Millar was confident that the Forum Report would not move the Thatcher government on the constitutional issue and the guarantee and that being the case Unionists did not have to fear it. The SDLP in the face of lack of political progress would be forced to work within Northern Ireland and the OUP were offering them some guarantees for the minority (e.g. Bill of Rights), I pointed to the inadequacy of the OUP offer. It would not stem the alienation that exists on the minority side. Mr. Millar felt that both communities would eventually come round if progress was made building from the bottom up rather than seeking dramatic political changes;
- (e) There is obviously an underlying worry on the part of the OUP on what moves the Irish Government will make after the Forum. He mentioned again the rumours he had heard (from the N.I.O.) of a Joint Security Commission. I said I was not aware of such a proposal and that moves in the security field on their own would not be enough to deal with the situation. He said that his party was very anxious to make progress within Northern Ireland and he could see the OUP in circumstances where majority rule devolved power became available accepting some "outside element" such as a parliamentary tier in order to involve the minority. He asked if a copy of the Forum Report could be made available to the party in Belfast on the day of publication. I said I would try to ensure this. It is clear from what he said that the OUP will focus on attacking the Irish unity elements in the report and strengthening British unwillingness to move on the main constitutional issue
- (f) I asked Mr. Millar what the next step would be from an OUP point of view particularly in relation to the Assembly. He said that the OUP remained willing to participate in the proposed Report Committee of the Assembly without rejoining the Assembly as such. When I pressed Mr. Millar on this he frankly admitted that the OUP would in all probability return to the Assembly as a majority of the party would not wish to be blamed for wrecking it. He also admitted that the party leadership had been anxious to remain outside the Assembly until after the Forum Report

so that they would be in a position to bargain with Prior on a return to the Assembly. They are hopeful that their discussion paper will have created the right image with Thatcher and Prior just before the Forum Report and that after it they can continue with their new reasonable image and perhaps return to the Assembly while calling on the SDLP to participate in discussions with them;

- (g) Mr. Millar indicated that another outcome of their discussion paper might be to produce fairly hysterical attacks from Paisley which he felt would not go down well with the Protestant electorate (in their current more moderate mood) <sup>and</sup> could well lose Paisley votes in the Euro-election. He is of the view that Kilfeddar will run in the Euro-election but that the outcome will still be Taylor, Paisley and Hume. He felt that Hume should comfortably beat Morrisson;
- (h) on the actual proposals contained in the discussion paper only the Bill of Rights and the support for Irish culture and identity are new elements in OUP policy. The document does spell out for the first time the party's view on administrative devolution. The Assembly would in effect become a regional local authority for all of Northern Ireland dealing with all the "non-contentious" aspects of government. It would operate on a majority rule basis taking into account the views and advice of committees of the Assembly dealing with different aspects of the Assembly's work. The committees and the Chairmanships would be apportioned in relation to party strength in the Assembly. The tone of the document was also deliberately cast in a moderate and conciliatory fashion which Mr. Millar admitted was directed more at the British government than the SDLP. He hoped that the OUP would be seen in a better and more constructive light as a result.



Martin Burke

27 April 1984

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