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Discussion with Bishop Eames on 14 May 1984

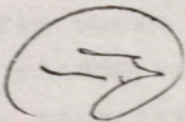
1. He made three points in relation to the Forum Report which he said reflected moderate Protestant reaction:-
 - (a) there was a lot of disappointment at the "brevity and lack of substance" contained in the Report. More had been expected after 11 months deliberation;
 - (b) Why did the Forum not face up to the need for some short term measures and outline some possibilities, "as everybody knows that Irish unity is not on for the foreseeable future";
 - (c) because of the way the Forum Report was presented by Mr. Haughey and reported by the media, the general perception in N.I. is of a Report directed almost totally towards a unitary State. This has let Unionist politicians "off the hook" and obscured the advances contained in the Report.

2. He personally accepted that there were good points in the Report and we discussed 5.1, 5.2 and 5.10 in particular. These represented an advance in Nationalist thinking but without public elaboration and emphasis on them, the perception in N.I. of the Forum Report would remain as at 1 (c) above which allows it to be too easily dismissed.

3. Bishop Eames said that he had lunch with Jim Molyneux three weeks ago and that he detected a willingness on his part to change and become somewhat more open to the need to offer the minority more than Unionism has in the past. Molyneux has been influenced by a growing fear among moderate Protestants that the situation is getting out of control and that efforts have to be made to accommodate the minority and the SDLP in particular. Molyneux had shown Bishop Eames a draft copy of the OUP document "the Way Forward". Bishop Eames was impressed by the tone of the document and had successfully he felt encouraged Molyneux to publish it almost immediately. Bishop Eames felt that we

should respond positively in public to the change in attitude contained in ^{the} OUP document. Molyneaux needed to be encouraged and we should strive at all costs to maintain the gap between Molyneaux and Paisley. He felt that Paisley was as hardline as ever and referred to a conversation between them at a recent funeral of a UDR man at which Bishop Eames had presided. Paisley had sought him out after the funeral and referred to his sermon about the need for dialogue between the two communities in scathing terms. Paisley said that he represented the feelings of the Protestant community and that his answer was the only one - "not an inch". One concession to the minority would lead to a gradual and inevitable erosion of the Unionist position.

4. Bishop Eames went on to say that he had lunched with Jim Prior the previous day and that speaking in strict confidence he had been impressed with some of his ideas. Prior sounded out Bishop Eames on the question of joint policing in border areas stressing the quality and effectiveness of the Gardai and the Special Task Force in particular. Prior also mentioned the possibility of modification of the guarantee in return for amendment of Articles 2 and 3. The Bishop had responded positively to Prior's thinking and said he was telling us in confidence so that we could reflect on the possibilities and Prior's openness in this area. Finally Bishop Eames said that Prior thought his chances of now getting another senior Cabinet post in September were good. He was concerned however that his successor might be of the Ian Gow variety leading to deadlock on any possibility of political movement.



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14 May 1984

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