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W.V. 5/11/83

Nationalist reactions to response by the British and Irish Governments to the Hume - Adams initiative

PST
PSS
Mr F. Munn
Mr T. Dalton
Joint Sec
Amb London
BL-

In the course of a recent trip to the North, nationalist contacts voiced their reactions to recent developments. The common theme of the predominant views which were reported to me by contacts was that Hume had been snubbed by the British and Irish Governments, that in comparison with the dramatic possibilities offered by Hume - Adams, the round table talks process offered little, that there was an instinctive popular perception that an opportunity to bring IRA violence to an end was being wasted, and that Hume's standing with nationalists in the North was very high. The following are summary details of reactions I received on the topic:


John Dallat Schoolteacher in Kilrea, SDLP councillor). He was struck by the degree of local support for Hume - Adams in the aftermath of the Brussels meeting. He commented that this reaction should be seen in tandem with an increasing local unhappiness with the IRA. This was particularly noticeable among young people. Dallat was initially sceptical about Hume - Adams out of fear that the Provos would gain from the process. His views have changed and he was anxious for reassurance (which I gave him) about the Irish Government's approach. The local Parish Priest, who had been at one of the Greysteel funerals, and whom I met as I was leaving Dallat, was particularly indignant over the "snub" to Hume;

Hugh Lewsley (SDLP Councillor for Poleglass). Lewsley is a strong critic of the Provos and has had some doubts concerning the potential capital which the IRA can make out of the Hume - Adams process. He commented that locally the hostile Provo approach to the SDLP has been unchanged despite the Hume - Adams dialogue. That said, he was worried at the damage that the apparent snub to Hume had done to the hopes of the nationalist community for a way out of the violence. His wife, Patricia, who is a Councillor for the Lower Falls, remarked on

the considerable local support which Hume, as distinct from the SDLP, is currently enjoying;

Brian Feeney. He was aware of considerable upset at the perceived treatment of Hume by Dublin, including on the part of people who normally are keen to be seen as unpolitical. He mentioned Gemma Loughran, wife of Gerry Loughran, who had been particularly critical of the Dublin Government. Feeney, when I met him on the evening of 3 November, was aware of Hume's annoyance, and that of Mallon whom he had met briefly at a function the previous evening. Mallon's stated view was that the Irish Government had no policy. Feeney gave as an example of local unhappiness the fact that Fr. Tom Toner, who is P.P. in Andersonstown and who is deeply and publicly hostile to the Provos, was enquiring about making an official complaint to the Irish Government;

Fr. Faul While supportive of John Hume, he has always been sceptical of the Hume - Adams process and voiced approval of the Tanaiste's statement and the agreement that the Governments would take charge of matters. (Fr. Faul is suspicious of anything which in his view smacks of concessions to the Provos. His approach remains that the immediate requirements are the continuation of the Anglo - Irish Agreement, full rights for nationalists, continued direct rule (to keep Unionists away from power - which in his view they are bound to abuse) and that unity need not be actively sought just yet. He had noticed a considerable groundswell in support of John Hume, particularly on the part of local middle class nationalists and "conservative" clergy i.e. those who would normally not be in agreement with Fr. Faul, that Hume had been badly treated by the two Governments. Jim Canning had heard considerable praise from local Provos for Hume and Adams and denunciation of the Irish Government.


Declan Kelleher
5 November 1993