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Confidential

22 February 1994

Mr. S. O'hUiginn
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin

Dear Assistant Secretary,

Conversation with Norman Stockton, Political Correspondent, UTV, 18 February 1994.

You may wish to be aware of some remarks made by Mr Stockton during the course of a conversation at the Embassy pre-rugby match reception on 18 February.

Mr. Stockton pointed to the re-emergence of Robert McCartney QC into the political domain by means of his article in the Belfast Telegraph on 3 February entitled "Has the IRA hijacked peace?" (copy attached for ease of reference). In the article Mr McCartney compared the peace process to the Munich agreement of 1938 and asked of British politicians if Munich is a chapter in their history they would not wish to repeat.

Mr Stockton did not comment on the content of the article but he did say that in his view Mr McCartney has in the past at least seemed to be uncomfortably close to the loyalist paramilitaries. He recalled that some years after a report by him which was critical of McCartney the latter telephoned him to complain and hinted strongly that his comments had not gone down well "on the street" - a reference Mr Stockton took to mean the loyalist paramilitaries.

In Mr Stockton's view: "You can take a man out of the Shankill but you can't take the Shankill out of the man".

Without mentioning any of the above I asked Frank Millar, London Editor of the Irish Times, about McCartney. Millar spoke to me in strictest confidence. They were political opponents within the Unionist Party. Whereas Millar was moving towards a position where he was accused of being a Federal Irelander, McCartney was pursuing an integrationalist line. Millar suspects that, as is allegedly the case with the Northern Ireland Tories, McCartney saw integration as a means of keeping catholics out of power in the North. McCartney is a man who is barely able to control his own physical aggression and has been involved in fisticuffs in the Law Library with persons "who happened to be" catholics.

Colin Wrafter
Press and Information Officer
cc B McMahon (Press) and Joint Secretary