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Reference Code:	2021/96/11
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26 OCTOBER 1994

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON
FOR G CORR FROM M COLLINSLOYALISTS' VISIT

13T, 7 July
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A/Sec of the
Secretary
Dr McAuley
Embassy London
Comptroller A.I.

1. The Loyalist delegation comprising Messrs Hutchinson, Spence and Ervine of the DUP and Adams, English and McMichael from the Ulster Democratic party arrived in Washington this afternoon and had a meeting with the Irish Desk Officer at the State Department, Mr Paul Van Son. The meeting lasted approximately an hour and a half. Subsequently, I spoke to Mr Van Son who offered the following detail of the exchanges (many of these repeat points made elsewhere during their other engagements in the U.S.):

- The Loyalists expressed themselves as strongly "pro-process". They were anxious to promote positive politics and not negative politics in Northern Ireland.
- They said that they realized that there was a need to reach out "to make unionism acceptable to Catholics" in Northern Ireland. There was a need to remove the stigmas of Protestantism from the politics of unionism - "we believe we have a case that unionism can be made attractive to Catholics", according to Spence.
- They said that the ceasefire was "rock solid" on their part. They also believed that the IRA was locked in and

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that "the Irish people wouldn't listen to the IRA" if there was any question of a reversion to violence. They felt that Adams was clever enough to keep "his gunmen on board". They said that they would not be the ones to stick the boot into Adams politically. They had an interest in ensuring that he remained around to keep his followers on board.

- Most Unionists were paranoid. They themselves had preconceived ideas of Irish Americans before their visit here but these had now been dispelled. They were particularly appreciative of the role of Bill Flynn. They were anxious to encourage others to come to the United States as they found the experience very helpful.
- They saw the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation as being designed to lock Sinn Fein into the political process. They did not want to participate in the Forum implying that to do so would be to give the Taoiseach kudos which they were not prepared to do. They had proposed a Unionist forum in order to lock Paisley into the process in the same way as the Forum will lock Adams in.
- They fully expected Paisley to walk out of any future talks at some stage claiming a "sell-out". They said "if we are there we can hold the line to keep Unionists in all-party talks". They expressed the view very strongly that sooner or later Paisley would have to be "dealt with politically".
- On any new cross-border arrangements, they were not concerned so much about topics as long as any such institution got power from Dublin or from any Northern Ireland Assembly that might be set up.

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- They repeatedly stressed the issue of prisoners in Northern Ireland. They felt that both Governments (and particularly the British) should make a move on this as a way of cementing peace. A shortening of sentences, a removal of parole restrictions etc would be very helpful. If this could be done around Christmas, it would "cement families into the peace process".
 - They were very critical of the fact that the British Government is not talking to them at the moment.
 - There was some discussion on Articles 2 and 3. Insofar as they were concerned this was primarily a symbolic issue and they were not too worried about it. They implied that their primary concern was the establishment of a local assembly in Northern Ireland.
 - They emphasised that economic regeneration was crucial.
 - In terms of handing in weapons, they said this must be done on a quid pro quo basis with others.
 - They suggested that they had no objection to Adams fundraising in the United States provided it was for "politicising the IRA".
2. According to Van Son, Spence and Ervine did most of the talking although the others made contributions from time to time.
 3. Tomorrow, the Loyalists have a programme here with involves meetings with Hill staffers of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and with staffers of Members of the Friends of