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D. O'Sullivan

Do see please

Mr 10/1/94

Mr. P. Nolan  
SEEN BY

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Meeting with Mr. Ken Maginnis

8th January, 1994

1. Mr. Fergus Finlay and the undersigned had dinner with Mr. Ken Maginnis and the McGimpsey brothers on Saturday, 8th January in Dublin. The conversation at dinner (and later in my home where the visitors spent the night) ranged in a general way over the current situation, including the following points:

- Maginnis (presumably drawing on security briefing he had been given) said the IRA had already rejected the Joint Declaration, but would string out their reaction until after our decision on Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act. There was then likely to be a renewed onslaught of violence on their part, with perhaps also an explicit rejection of the Declaration.
- Both Maginnis and the McGimpseys argued strongly against a change in Section 31, on the grounds that access to the airwaves would be ruthlessly exploited by Sinn Fein. (They all maintained that RTE had a considerable audience in Unionist areas where it could be received, and that they got lively reactions from their own constituents on their appearances on RTE). We said that no decision had yet been taken, but pointed to the arguments in favour of change, both from a libertarian perspective and in terms of increasing the pressure on Sinn Fein by exposing them to scrutiny and demystifying them. Maginnis agreed the current British "voice-over" approach was a nonsense, but argued that Section 31 was a different matter. He urged, as a fall-back, that Section 31 should be

renewed for a shorter period than a year, to hold out a carrot for early cessation but to avoid making the concession before violence was abandoned. They all felt that dropping Section 31 here would be strongly criticised by the unionist community and would make it more difficult for the UUP to hold the line on the Declaration against the DUP.

- They felt that, so far, the DUP were not having much impact in opposing the Declaration and that Molyneaux's stance was vindicated by the public. The reports of splits and tensions within the UUP on the Declaration were without foundation. There were well-attended public meetings (amounting almost to mini-Conferences for the party) which fully backed the leader. We paid tribute to Mr. Molyneaux's posture, including his remarks in the Belfast Telegraph the previous evening. (There was no hint from them that Molyneaux was any closer to meeting the Tanaiste).

- They were highly critical of John Hume's role, his difficult manner and apparent hostility to internal arrangements, which they felt would otherwise be supported by Northern nationalists. Maginnis said he felt able to communicate with Mallon in a way he never could with Hume. We urged the reality of Hume's influence in the nationalist community and that it would be unrealistic to think that Northern nationalists would be drawn into internal arrangements, especially if Hume was opposed, and that it would be necessary for Unionists to find a way of working with him.

- Maginnis was critical, but in relatively unspecific terms, of the security situation on the border. When challenged, his position seemed to be that every murder

in the border area was, of itself, proof of a failure of security and of the need for further effort, rather than any indictment of the will or efforts of our security forces. Extradition and internment also came up. We explained the position of the Government on both issues.

*Sh*

Sean O'Uiginn  
10 January, 1993

cc

EST  
Mr Finlay  
PSS  
Mr Murray  
Dr Macneil  
Mr J. Bolton  
*Sh*  
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