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To: HQ
For: Secretary GallagherFrom: Belfast
From: Joint SecretarySubj: Conversation with Adam Ingram and Paul Murphy (2)

1. The following are a number of points of interest which arose in a discussion of current political matters over dinner last night with Paul Murphy and Adam Ingram.
2. Regretting the UUP's failure to win more seats in the Assembly elections, Murphy pinned the blame squarely on the Conservatives at Westminster. Their tactics on the NI (Sentences) Bill in the Commons recently had the effect of undermining Trimble and strengthening the position of the anti-Agreement parties. Nigel Warner, who was also present, suggested that the Government would find ways of punishing the Tories in electoral terms for breaching bipartisanship on Northern Ireland. (He and Murphy remarked in this context on Andrew Mackay's conspicuous display of solidarity with the Secretary of State in an interview last Sunday).
3. Murphy suggested that, with David Trimble focussing on the Assembly henceforth and Ken Maginnis providing the only pro-Agreement voice among UUP MPs, there would be an opportunity for Jeffrey Donaldson to establish himself as the de facto leader of the UUP at Westminster. This could be a useful power base for Donaldson, particularly if the Assembly were to falter. He saw a distinct possibility of a new grouping emerging around Donaldson and Robinson, though how Paisley and McCartney could be kept at bay was not clear.
4. We laid fresh emphasis on the need for the shadow Executive to be appointed at the Assembly's second meeting (14 September). Agreeing with this, Murphy noted that the First Minister and Deputy First Minister are due to report back to the

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Assembly on this issue at the next meeting and that it could reasonably be expected that the matter would be finalised at that point. There is the additional consideration that the list of areas for implementation and cooperation cannot sensibly be agreed by 31 October in the absence of Ministerial portfolios being agreed and the shadow Executive coming into being. Murphy said that Trimble continues to favour a much later date than September but suggested that he would be in no doubt about Mallon's views on the matter. The British are no less anxious than we are to see the Executive formed in September. ("David would like to leave it to November or December but he can't have it").

5. The NIO's assumption is that Alderdice will be the interim Presiding Officer for the remainder of the shadow period, i.e., that the parties will be content for the election to the permanent position (which attracted no nominations at last week's meeting) to be deferred until the Assembly comes formally into existence.
6. Murphy presumed that plans would have to be made in September for the first meetings of the North/South Ministerial Council and the BIC. He and Jonathan Stephens suggested that the NSMC at its first meeting might agree a programme of consultations to enable the 31 October deadline to be met and that formal agreement on the list would be reached at a subsequent meeting in October.
7. As regards a venue for the BIC, Murphy mentioned that Liverpool has been proposed by the Liverpool City Council. He saw this as an attractive possibility, partly because it would underline the novelty of this institution and partly because of Liverpool's credentials as "an Irish city".
8. As regards the Assembly's permanent venue, he presumed that the SDLP and Sinn Féin would find it difficult to justify to their electorates the cost of building a new premises and hoped that they would settle eventually for Parliament Buildings. He bemoaned the lot of NIO Ministers who will have to leave Parliament Buildings in September, in order to make way for the Assembly, and transfer to Castle Buildings.
9. Finally, Murphy mentioned that the British Government would be tabling the Northern Ireland Bill in the Commons next week. We have just had a lengthy briefing from Bill Jeffrey and Jonathan Stephens on this subject. A copy of the Bill was provided and a detailed report follows.