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Meeting with SDLP re. North/South Issues on 24 September 1998.
Summary Report

1. Tim O'Connor, Rory Montgomery and the undersigned met with Seán Farren and Denis Haughey of the SDLP to discuss the latest position on our respective stages of preparation in this area. We briefed them informally on the latest thinking at official level our side and advised them of our aim to get a Memorandum to Government in the next 2/3 weeks to get political clearance on a negotiating approach to the areas for co-operation and implementation. Mark Durkan also participated in an initial discussion on the Northern Ireland Bill. They were briefed on our thinking on the latest amendments, including those relating to Strand Two on which they had some concerns. It was agreed that we would keep in touch on this in the period ahead.

2. The SDLP had a meeting earlier in the day with the UUP at which they had an initial discussion on possible candidates for Implementation Bodies. The UUP were represented by Reg Empey, Michael McGimpsey, David Campbell and Esmond Birnie. The UUP shared their views on seven candidates they have identified to date, viz:
 - **A Commission to Control Supports for Inward Investment** (i.e. along lines of mechanisms used within NAFTA and WTO to create level playing field);
 - **A Food Safety Body;**
 - **A Body to resolve "Frontiers for Territorial Seas and Exploration";**
 - **An Agricultural Research Body** (dealing only with animal and plant health);
 - **An Environmental Protection Body, and**
 - **Bodies to map out boundaries in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle** (2 separate bodies)

Comment:

It is somewhat worrying, though perhaps not greatly surprising, that the UUP's thinking at this stage shows such a low level of ambition. The proposals bear the hallmark of the legalistic and minimalist approach of Austen Morgan, who has been doing some initial work for David Trimble in this area. It would appear, at this stage at least, that the UUP are prepared to run with Morgan's views. The fact that three out of the seven areas relate simply to the mapping out of international boundaries - which, in any event, is a matter for the two Governments - is a reflection of the minimalism of the UUP approach at this point. On the other hand, Denis Haughey's sense was that some of the UUP delegation were themselves hearing these proposals for the first time. The SDLP gave them their own proposals for North/South areas. It is to be hoped that, as the discussions proceed, the UUP position can be ratcheted considerably upwards. The two sides are due to meet for a further discussion next Monday.

James Mc Intyre

James Mc Intyre
Anglo-Irish Division
25 September 1998.

*cc. Sec. Sec Gallagher, Alise Kirwan DIT, Aine Furlong DIFin Joint Secretary Legal Advisor Mr O'Connell
Counselors A-1, Seán, Ms NI Healthcare A-G's Office, Ms O'Donoghue, Mr Hare,
Mr Jordan.*