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E.R.

PAB/5374/RE

PS/Secretary of State (I&B)(M)

UUP Election Manifesto

① Sir E. Bell
② POL.

PS/Minisers (I&B)(M),	Miss Davies	2/10
PS/PUS (I&B)(M)	Mr Palmer	
PS/Sir E Bell ✓	Mr Buxton	
Mr Bourn	Mr Coulson	
Mr Brennan (M)	Mr Boys Smith (M)	
Mr Angel (M)	Mr Abbott (M)	
Mr Merifield c/a	Miss MacGlashan	
Mr Gilliland		

1. The UUP Election Manifesto was launched on 28 September. It is a longish document and a copy is attached for you only. If anyone else would like to see a copy, please let me know.

2. The manifesto begins by asserting the need above all else to maintain the union and oppose the Irish dimension, which is designed to break it (by implication, an independent Ulster would be just as undesirable as Irish unification). It goes on to call for the restoration of an elected legislature and government based on "normal British and Irish democratic practice" (ie straight majority rule). Devolved government is necessary inter alia to face up to terrorism; to end the "present constitutional uncertainty caused by the opportunism of the major political parties at Westminster who persist in dealing with Ulster affairs in an all Ireland context"; to restore commercial confidence and attract capital; and to establish a "proper system of local government".

3. The third section, entitled, "Transform the Assembly into a Body Acceptable to Unionists", repeats the claim of NIO and FCO plots to "entrap those elected to the Assembly into powersharing with republicans and an Irish Dimension". While the UUP has been "totally consistent in striving for the return of devolved government to Ulster, we have been equally consistent in refusing to enter into powersharing with republicans and any Irish Dimension designed to facilitate Irish unification" The UUP will use every opportunity in the Assembly to bring direct rule to account, but will try to secure the transfer of power "as quickly as possible upon terms acceptable to the Unionist people of Ulster. Consequently, we regard the Assembly elections as no more than the first step on the long, hard road towards the establishment of genuine parliamentary institutions"

4. The manifesto has long sections on security, the economy, energy etc. They contain no surprises.

5. The manifesto has been the subject of considerable squabbling inside the Party over the last month or two. Traditionally, the leader decides


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the text: this time, Mr Molyneaux was obliged to let the party officials as a group into the task. We had been told that the manifesto would be a compromise: it has emerged as a vague but traditionally devolutionist document advocating the return of Stormont on pre-1973 lines. This, the lowest common denominator of unionism, is undoubtedly also what most party members want. The third section (para 3 above) represents the Molyneaux group's attempts to commit the UUP to a collision course with the Government so as to destroy the Assembly and to nail down party-members who in certain circumstances might contemplate arrangements with non-unionists and even cross-border links. My guess is that it will not succeed, though the devolutionists will have it quoted against them.

6. Mr Molyneaux will no doubt square his own circle by stressing the impossibility of "real" devolution. In the press conference to launch the document, he emphasised the manifesto's call to transform the 1982 Act into a "working structure": the requirement for cross-community support stuck in all unionists' throats. He warned of unionist frustration and of possible instability.

7. The trouble with the UUP manifesto is that it says everything and nothing. It is a wordy and imprecise document which, as Mr McCusker has put it, represents all views within the party. The contrast with the concise and punchy DUP manifesto is striking.

8. The struggle over the manifesto has predictably failed to resolve the differences within the UUP. The struggle will almost certainly go on in the Assembly. Mr Molyneaux is now signalling his tactics, to call for early majority rule. Many in his party will be hanging onto his coat-tails. The balance of the UUP members elected will be important.


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