

E.R.

DESKEY 1730 **CONFIDENTIAL**

① Dr. Ewart Bell 30/6
② Pol 30/6

Mr Merifield
by mufax

cc PS/SofS (L&B) - MA
PS/PUS (L&B) - MA
PS/Sir Ewart Bell - MA
Mr Brennan
Mr Angel
Mr Abbott
Mr Boys Smith
Mr Reeve - MA

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SECRETARY OF STATE'S DISCUSSION WITH JOHN HUME

The Secretary of State saw Mr Hume in the House of Commons on 28 June. No-one else was present.

The Secretary of State said that Mr Hume was still winding down from delivering his maiden speech in the House. He felt it had been well received. He seemed disappointed, however, that there was not more interest in Northern Ireland's and Irish affairs in the House. He thought the Commons might have wanted to conduct a great and continuing debate on the future of Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State said that interest was sporadic and relatively superficial.

Mr Hume said that he saw little sign of movement among unionists. He still felt the Government should be doing more to put pressure on them. At the same time, he noted increasing intransigence in the minority community. In critical references to Mr Mallon, he suggested that the SDLP's electoral appeal in Northern Ireland had been reduced by too great an emphasis on republicanism. He regretted the party's failure to capture Down South.

Mr Hume said that the Forum was likely to produce three blueprints one for unification, one for a federal solution and one for joint sovereignty. He thought the third presented the best prospects.

In general conversation, it was clear to the Secretary of State that Mr Hume still blamed the UK Government for the failure of Sunningdale

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and for the collapse of the power-sharing executive. The Secretary of State did not detect any inclination on Mr Hume's part to change his view of the Assembly.

The Secretary of State considers that this conversation tended to confirm the assessment made at the meeting with officials on 22 June that there was little scope for significant progress until after the Forum had reported.

The Secretary of State and Mr Hume agreed to continue to keep in touch.

OK

J M LYON
Private Secretary

29 June 1983

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