

① Sir Ewart  
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cc: PS/S of S (L&B)  
PS/PUS (L&B)  
PS/Sir E Bell  
Mr Merfield  
Mr Abbott  
Mr Edis



NOTE FOR THE RECORD

MEETING WITH FRANK MILLAR, UUP

1. I had lunch yesterday with Frank Millar, general secretary of the Official Unionist Party. The following points are worth recording:-

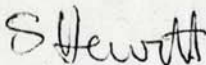
- (a) Following their success in the general election, the UUP believe they have turned the tide against the DUP and that their large share of the vote is evidence of the electorate's lack of support for the Assembly. They are looking ahead now to the European elections next June as a further opportunity to consolidate their position as the major unionist party. Although unpopular, John Taylor is likely to be the UUP. candidate again as nobody else particularly wants to become an MEP.
- (b) The UUP leadership now believes that public opinion overseas - especially in the USA - is important and can be educated to see the unionist point of view. Plans are being made for a major visit to the States in the early part of next year, before St Patrick's Day, and the party's delegates will probably include Mr Molyneaux, Mr Smyth, Mr McCusker and Mr Graham.
- (c) Mr Millar remains opposed to the use of "supergrasses" because he believes the system erodes the basic standards of justice. He claims to be making progress in convincing others in the party - he mentioned Mr Molyneaux but this seems unlikely - that the UUP should oppose the practice of using evidence supplied by converted terrorists. Also on security, Mr Millar said that the issue of prison segregation was causing the UUP some difficulties: they were determined not to support any move which might lead to "political status" but they were under increasing pressure from the families of Loyalist prisoners. Mr Millar did not say so explicitly but I got the impression that one or two of the party's Assemblymen are expected to support the DUP when the issue comes before the Assembly in October. I also took it that by "the families

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of Loyalist prisoners", Mr Millar actually meant the Loyalist paramilitaries.

- (d) Mr Millar insisted that he was still the party's press officer. I was unable to confirm a report that Mr Graham has taken over many of his duties in this respect and I did not push the matter any further.
- (e) Mr Millar treated me to the usual lecture about the failure of the NIO to properly understand the attitude of his party to devolution. The UUP are now, according to Mr Millar, almost entirely integrationist. The devolutionist group has little influence and consist of a few "back-woods men" who hanker after a return of majority powers. The leadership of the party believe there is little prospect of securing a return to the old Stormont and, in any case, they would prefer to see Northern Ireland properly integrated into the United Kingdom. As a part of this process, a return of local authority powers to an upper tier of local government based, perhaps, on the Assembly, would be all that is needed to give Ulster folk a "say in their own affairs". Mr Millar's views are very much the product of his own, unrepresentative background. He is far more cosmopolitan in outlook than many of his party colleagues and, I suspect, somewhat out of touch with grass-roots unionist opinion. Furthermore, he is always keen to paper over the cracks in the UUP and present a united front.



S G HEWITT  
Political Affairs Division

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