

E. R.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAB/1818/BN

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)-m
PS/Mr Scott (L&B)-m
PS/Dr Mawhinney (L&B)-m
PS/PUS (L&B) -m
PS/Mr Bloomfield
Mr Stephens
Mr Brennan -m
Mr Chesterton -m
Mr Innes
Mr Elliott
Mr Spence
Mr Gilliland
Mr Bell -m
Mr G Hewitt
Miss Elliott -m
Mr Blackwell
Mr S Hewitt
Mr Mackay -m

RBS 106/5

FURTHER CONTACT WITH UUP

I spoke to four members of the UUP yesterday during which the usual topics were covered.

2. All of them are committed devolutionists who continue to claim that the majority of their party support this aim though the integrationist faction has gained ⁱⁿ influence in recent weeks. The change has taken place, in their opinion, because of considerable confusion within the party as to what integration actually means and also because of the belief that integration will mean the demise of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

3. They expressed worries about the damage being done to the party by this continuing debate but seem to place all the blame on the integrationist faction. One of the parties said he would not be surprised if a more formal split occurred which would further weaken the UUP viz-a-viz DUP. I asked what he meant and was told it was not beyond the bounds of possibility that a new party would be formed. This idea was more or less rubbished by those present but this thought was repeated to me this morning by a unionist contact in the North West who told me that such a possibility had been discussed between himself and Harry West no later than Monday.

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4. I had lunch today with a member of the policy committee of the UUP (confirmed integrationist and supporter of both Mr Powell and Mr McCartney). He told me that the debate within the party was unhelpful in that it presented a disunited front with no clear leadership.

5. I told him, when asked, that the Secretary of State was prepared to listen to any views on any topic which would help the situation - repeat the text of the Prime Minister's meeting with the unionist leaders and also her most recent letter.

Comment

6. None of the unionists I spoke to were optimistic that talks would get under way though all of them seem to want this course of action to be followed. They were also anxious that this level of contact be maintained and I have promised to keep in touch with all of them.


J E McCONNELL

Political Affairs Division

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