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AJM/890/AG

cc: PS/S of S (L&B)  
PS/PUS (L&B)  
PS/Mr Bloomfield  
Mr Brennan  
Mr Carvill  
Miss Elliott  
Mr Lyon  
Mr Reeve  
Mr Bickham

NOTE FOR RECORD

1. I am recording some of the more significant lines of discussion at a dinner last night for Mr Carrick (Consul General Chicago), which was attended by Dr Paul Arthur Mr Paddy Devlin, Dr Brian Feeney (SDLP), Mr McCartney (UUP), Mr Sean Neeson (Alliance) and Mr Sammy Wilson (DUP).

(a) Economic General agreement that new jobs were urgently required, especially to offset the instability engendered by the very high employment in areas like West Belfast. Emphasis was placed on fair opportunity rather than quotas etc, but there was concern about Shorts. Mr Wilson, surprisingly, said he thought the FEA should be strengthened and have better quality staff and improved capability. Mr Neeson agreed. Some comments were made about the rigidity of DED rules which, it was alleged, inhibited local development of small scale or co-operative enterprise inside the areas of highest employment and for the 17-25 age group. (This was the argument about a gap between YTP, ending at 17, and the availability of consultancy guidance thereafter). LEDU's tight guidelines in LEP schemes were criticised as inhibiting self help. Criticism also of public bodies not "buying Northern Irish" or going too often to British firms for work that might be handled locally.

(b) Human Rights Mr McCartney, as always, stressed equality under the law and in opportunity. He tended to be less precise when converting that into political terms. Mr Feeney spoke in terms of equality of esteem between the two communities.

(c) Constitutional Dr Feeney pointed to Clause 4 of the SDLP constitution which reflected the understanding that there could be no change in Northern Ireland's constitutional position unless the majority decided otherwise. This was not sufficient to prevent

Mr McCartney rising at every opportunity to interpret any SDLP preference to the Irish dimension as implying a wish to secure unification of NI into a state which "in view of its shaky foundations" Mr McCartney represented "could be another Cuba", with economic collapse and a fascist non-liberal (liberal in the John Stuart Mill sense) regime.

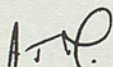
(d) Political Mr McCartney was adamant that British Governments could not be trusted, (Dr Feeney rather agreed), and that this therefore made some form of integration the only security unionists could accept. But he did not seem to see the McCrory gap being filled by some pale imitation of a British Shire County Council-he wanted a real administration with powers to determine policy. Both Mr McCartney and Dr Feeney evaded questions on whether parties from both sides would be prepared to accept any sharing of responsibility (albeit on the present Assembly lines) in such a body. Mr McCartney was edging towards the right of the majority to rule, Dr Feeney to a position whereby he wanted the basic issues like control of the RUC and UDR settled before the secondary issue of local administration could properly be handled. Such equivocation did not please Mr Neeson - though the guests united in deploring the absence of any clear exposition of British policy. They all felt that the Government had to say what it wanted, and "not shelter behind the screen of placing on parties a responsibility they could not discharge". However, in looking at the UUP, it was very difficult to decide what the Way Forward proposals meant in practice, or to detect any real attempt by UUP to engage the DUP - whose concern for internal stability through an Assembly type body was advanced by Mr Wilson in a low key and reasonable way.

(e) Both Mr Devlin and Dr Feeney spoke bitterly of the Workers Party who they said were directly and deeply involved in criminal activity.

2. Anglo Irishry was mentioned - Dr Feeney agreed that Dublin needed to be a party to decisions about the internal structure, and he also suggested that more needed to be done to develop areas of co-operation eg for Fermanagh/Leitrim, Armagh/Monaghan etc.

It was interesting that he saw such localised co-operation as important in a wider political context as neither Mr McCartney nor Mr Wilson took issue about the principle of such co-operation. There was a degree of support for schemes like Kinsale Gas, if beneficial to Northern Ireland, though the tendency of some political figures to represent such schemes as making the North dependant on the South were noted. Mr McCartney, predictably, wondered why "£70m"(his figure) could not have been paid to pipe North Sea gas to Northern Ireland and he saw a lack of commitment to Northern Ireland in the British Government's reluctance to ensure a continuation of Belfast Liverpool Ferry services by a British company, and the approaches on North Sea gas. I denied strongly his allegations that NIO had leaked the joint courts/ Lord Lowry story.

3. The scare element of recent statements on security were played down somewhat, but there was a definite feeling that the poor employment prospects generally, and uncertainty in the political scene, were contributing to a growing tension. This would not be helped by Mr McCartney's rather self righteous defence of the UUP's actions, his tendency to dismiss the DUP as an extreme movement & his inadequate definition of political proposals in a way that would engage the SDLP.



A J MERIFIELD

26 June 1985