

C O N F I D E N T I A L



FROM D C KIRK - CPL
15 FEBRUARY 1989

UNDER/SEC 223/2
15 FEB 1989
CENT SEC

- cc PS/SofS (L&B)-B
- PS/MofS (L&B)-B
- PS/Mr Needham (L&B)-B
- PS/PUS (L&B)-B
- ① PS/Sir K Bloomfield -B ✓ 15/2
- Mr Burns -B
- Mr Miles -B
- Mr Thomas -B
- Mr J McConnell -B
- Mr Wood (L&B)-B

② Mc Spence

Mc Spence

③ Mc Wilson 22/2
Wau & Return pl

PS/DR MAWHINNEY (L&B)-B

POLITICAL CONTACTS

We need to decide what the next steps should be following the Secretary of State's speech yesterday.

2. The speech has received good media coverage, albeit overshadowed somewhat by last night's murder. I do not think that we could have expected a much better reaction from local politicians. Although inevitably the political leadership have already commented, they seem to have done so in the knowledge that they were not being asked for an immediate response by the Secretary of State, and they seem to have been indicating that they were prepared to reflect on what he had said. There is evidently planned to be a joint Unionist statement on Friday, although Mr Paisley has already said a good deal, including some not unhelpful hints to set against his "headline position". PAB will be commenting further. It may be no bad thing for the NIO to be able to take the position in the next two or three days that politicians will want to reflect on the detailed text of what the Secretary of State said, before Dr Mawhinney starts to seek contacts with them. We did not want headlines about an

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"initiative" to raise false expectations that something major was immediately in the offering: people need to read the speech.

3. To aid discussion between Ministers and officials over the next day or two about the next steps, I have set out at Annex A a list of the possible political and non-political contacts which Dr Mawhinney might seek. This is a fairly formidable list, and we shall need to consider the priorities and the batting order over the next few weeks. We are assuming that the contacts will be wide - ranging and that we would not necessarily be seeking to include the party leaders at the start of the process: this point, particularly in relation to the Unionists, clearly needs to be discussed. At Annex B is a piece I have described as an "Agenda". It seems desirable that there should be common themes and a common structure to the various discussions we are seeking, although the precise list of questions will obviously have to be tailored quite considerably for particular interlocutors. Both Annexes are very much by way of first thoughts and have scarcely been discussed with others in the office. As I say, they are merely designed to be a starting-point for discussion. I believe it will be helpful for us to have ready in the next few days some more detailed papers analysing where we think the parties stand in the light of the talks about talks last year, together with our own analysis of where the common ground between the parties might be found. Work on these papers is in hand.

(SIGNED)

D C KIRK
Constitutional and Political Division
15 February 1989

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Bishop Gordon McMullen

Presbyterian- Godfrey Brown (Moderator)
Tom Simpson (General Secretary)
Harold Allen

Methodist - Stanley Whittington (President)
Charles Eyre (General Secretary)

Stage 2 - Groups/influential individuals

Charter Group Harry West (lunched with Dr
Austin Ardill Mawhinney on
David McNarry 13.2.89)

Campaign For
A Devolved
Government Christopher/ (meeting with
Michael McGimpsey Dr Mawhinney
Ken Lorimer on 27.2.89)
Terry Donaghy (RC Solicitor)

Two
Traditions - Eric Elliot
Terry Donaghy
Ronnie Buchanan (QUB)

Northern
Consensus - Des Rea (QUB)
David Hewitt (solicitor)
Robert Stout (QUB)
Ken Magninnis (UUP)
Eddie McGrady (SDLP)
Raymond Ferguson (UUP Councillor
Enniskillen)

Stage 3 - Individuals

Paul Arthur (University of Ulster)

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John Dunlop (Presbyterian Minister)
John Simpson (QUB)
Sir Frederick Catherwood
Dennis Faulkner (meeting planned)

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ANNEX B

AN OUTLINE 'AGENDA' FOR DR MAWHINNEY'S CONSULTATIONS

General

Our aim is to explore current party positions, identifying areas of common ground, with a view to facilitating inter-party talks in due course and other possible means of (earlier) political progress. More specifically, our objectives are to establish ongoing contact with the Unionists, a more defined and constructive approach by the SDLP, and some further of the political atmosphere which could enable more progress to be made after the summer elections. We shall want to take stock ourselves by Easter (six weeks away) and we may want some form of public comment on progress in April (culminations of Article 11 review).

1. Introduction Not an Initiative, but an exploration of current positions, to help parties to determine the way ahead for themselves by taking their own initiatives.
2. Start by reflecting on role of constitutional politicians. By definition, they agree on rejecting violence. Are there other areas of agreement about the role of constitutional politicians? (And do they have a contribution to make in marginalising terrorists?) And what role can non-politicians (e.g. Churches) play?
3. How can politicians reflect interests of constituents? And build on their support? What are issues they want to see addressed, and how can they be involved with the Government in discussing them? Lead on to discussion of devolved government - models etc - and possible steps on the way towards devolution or 'alternatives' (if Unionists suggest them as such), including e.g. further joint consultation with Government, role of Westminster (including procedures, NIC etc) and local government. Possible role of Assembly?

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4. How then does each party see the 'devolutionary objective'? And how can agreement be achieved? If the general view is that it is a long haul, how do we make progress towards it by accommodation between the parties? What steps can the parties themselves, and the Government, take? If it is a matter of trust and willpower, how can the parties build that trust?

5. If it is all contingent on the North/South relationship - and is it a common ground that that is important and there is an 'Irish dimension'? - how do the parties and the communities see that being dealt with? Does not a permanent and stable relationship with the Republic depend on an internal settlement? How can the trust between nationalists and unionists be established to discuss the possibility of an agreement that would 'transcend the Agreement' or replace it, unless through dialogue together without preconditions?

6. What assessments does each party make (if they are willing to discuss them) of the other parties' positions, and can they discuss those assessments together? How do they want the Government to be involved in the process (intermediaries, Government statements, talks on specific social and economic issues?), if at all? What part can parties (and non-politicians) play in pursuing the contacts and objectives discussed? Next steps.

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