

*Murphy Please*

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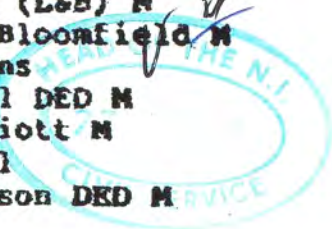
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2. Pot 11/2.*

Mr McConnell M

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RECEIVED  
1240  
23 APR 1987  
MURPHY HOUSE  
STORMONT HOUSE

- cc PS/S of S (L&B) M
- PS/Mr Scott (L&B) M
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- PS/Mr Viggers (L&B) M
- PS/PUS (L&B) M
- 1. PS/Mr Bloomfield M
- Mr Burns
- Mr Fell DED M
- Mr Elliott M
- Mr Bell
- Mr Wilson DED M



MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES - JOHN HUME'S LETTER

Thank you for sending me a copy of the letter John Hume has written to the Speaker of the Californian Assembly. You invited comments on the proposal to send a copy of the letter to Cardinal O'Fiaich.

2. Although the letter is helpful in strengthening our hand in California, it is very much a carter's egg. It is somewhat disappointing in its indirectness in presenting the disinvestment point. And in three respects it could rebound upon us:

- i. its presentation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Conference as a "decision-making process" enabling the two Governments to "deal with the problems of Northern Ireland" is not helpful;
- ii. equally the claim that the SDLP's proposals were submitted through the Conference, thus resulting in the Government's proposals in the Consultative Document is untrue and could make it more difficult for any eventual legislative proposals to find acceptance in the majority community;
- iii. the conclusion of the letter is double-edged in that Hume suggests that action is withheld until the Californians can see the colour of our money in the form of our legislative proposals, so enabling pressure for effective legislation to be maintained. This may discourage outright rejection of the Californian legislation and encourage the reappearance of a Bill next year.

3. Against this background, I think that it would be wise for us to avoid appearing to endorse the Hume letter. If we want to quote him we should continue to rely on the Boston Globe interview (which has the added advantage of being wholly in the public domain). In dealing with the Cardinal I would think that a conversation on the basis of the Boston Globe interview - supported by knowledge of the existence of the letter to California - might be preferable to our actually sending a copy of

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the letter. However, you are in a better position to judge than I. If your assessment is that reading the letter itself might be what swayed the Cardinal to take a helpful line with the American Bishops, I would not resist that, since the advantages of getting the Catholic Church on the US on-side seem to me to outweigh the disadvantages of sending him the Hume letter.

*DC*

D CHESTERTON  
23 April 1987

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