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Ms Hutchinson (Cent. Sec.)

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M Miles
M Bell

We spoke.
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UNDER SECRETARY
(Law and Order)
673
30 JAN 1990
NIO BELFAST

From: I M Burns
Date: 25 January 1990
cc: (to be circulated by
SIL, NIO);
PS/S of S (L & B)
PS/Min of State (L & B)
PS/Mr Needham
PS/Dr Mawhinney
PS/PUS (L & B)
Mr Fell
Mr A P Wilson
Mr Blackwell
Mr J McConnell

Secretary of State

CONGRESSMAN DONNELLY'S VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND

1. I had a long talk on 24 January with Warner Brandt, the senior staffer (from Speaker Foley's office) who accompanied Congressman Donnelly on last week's visit to Northern Ireland. He was emphatic that no damage had been done by the vigorous nature of the discussion at lunch on 18 January. Mr Donnelly had got to know Northern Ireland Ministers well and felt able to have a frank discussion with them. Hard talking between politicians was to be expected and did not indicate any deterioration in the relationship, or any shift in Mr Donnelly's sympathies. What had disconcerted Mr Donnelly was the involvement of officials in such hard talking - but I got the impression from Mr Brandt that this was partly because officials were seen (by Donnelly) to be defending the indefensible (the UDR).
2. There are clearly some lessons for us to learn in handling future visits by Congressman Donnelly (though Brandt went out of his way to thank me for the openness and frankness we show to the Friends of Ireland, and for the amount of Ministerial time made available to them: they are clearly impressed by the extent of our response to their interest). But Brandt is quite clear in his advice that there is nothing about the meetings on 17-18 January that calls for any follow-up from us. (Of course, our action in asking whether we had given offence will itself no doubt be reported back to Mr Donnelly, and is itself likely to be a palliative, had one been needed.)
3. Brandt did warn me, however, that we can expect a lot more concern and criticism from Donnelly about the UDR. This might mean that it would be helpful at some stage to send him a considered letter on the whole issue of the Regiment - such careful Ministerial letters have helped to defuse issues in the past: it would I think be wrong to send such a letter in immediate response to the recent visit, but we might consider

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sending one after the results of the Stevens enquiry become public. By copy of this minute I am asking SIL and SPOB to consider this further.

A. B. [unclear]

I M Burns