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FROM: JOHN McCONNELL
DATE: 13 DECEMBER 1989

Note for the Record

cc PS/Secretary of State(B&L) - B
PS/Minister of State (B&L) - B
PS/Dr Mawhinney (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
Sir Kenneth Bloomfield - B
Mr Burns - B
Mr Miles - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Kirk - B
Mr Daniell - B

DISCUSSION WITH KEN MAGINNIS

Mr Maginnis rang me yesterday and arranged to call to my home for a discussion which lasted for over three and a half hours. During this rather lengthy discussion the points of interest which arose were as follows:

Secretary of State

2. Mr Maginnis told me that he had been very impressed with a meeting he and David Trimble had had with the Secretary of State not least because he felt that the points which were being made were being noted and full weight being given to them. He suspected that some of the things the Secretary of State has been saying recently have taken into account some of the points that were made on that particular day. While he did not ask for a date for a further meeting there is no doubt that he intends to carry through with his promise that the last one was the first of a series.

Discussions with Ministers

3. Mr Maginnis repeated the assertion which he had made to me privately and then in public on Sunday that his party was guilty of translating the tactic of boycotting Ministers into a principle which had served no useful purpose whatsoever. He continues to agitate within his grouping for a change in this position. But he believes Mr Molyneaux, in particular, is so keen to avoid political progress that he will do almost anything to prevent any kind of meetings which could lead to discussion on political progress. He

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went on to say that Mr Molyneaux's claim within the UUP is that the party have succeeded in their objectives over the last four years (ie since the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement) in that political progress has been stymied and there is a steady drift towards integration. Those within the party who had been prepared to put their head above the parapet are now either worried about their own position or are thinking of stepping down and allowing others, if there are any, to make the running. The common complaint within the party is that there is too much secrecy and that people are being asked to take things on trust too often - a position which does not lend itself to anything other than estultification of political movement.

SDLP

4. John Hume and Jim Molyneaux are two main people in the political field in Northern Ireland who wish to avoid any moves whatsoever which might lead to some sort of internal settlement in Northern Ireland. This assertion by Mr Maginnis is one which he says is shared by a large number of people both in his party and the SDLP. He went on to say that if there is to be any political progress in Northern Ireland he can only see it coming from people like Peter Robinson and the devolutionary wing of the SDLP led by Eddie McGrady.

5. At this stage he made it clear that he was aware that some sort of discussions were going on between HMG and the DUP ("Peter and Sammy", he said) and that he has spoken to Peter Robinson and that they share a common purpose which has been growing over the last twelve months to a degree that they can do business together. He suggested that he (Maginnis) and Jack Allen should come and meet the same people who were meeting the DUP to see if there was any way of breaking the current deadlock. I did not comment other than to say that that was an interesting suggestion which I would feed into the system. (I suspect that Mr Maginnis would like to meet us without the knowledge of Mr Molyneaux but I am sure that if Jack Allen is involved he will advise that the leader be informed.)

UUP

6. We discussed the various MPs and Mr Maginnis's conclusions are as follows:

Roy Beggs - is strongly interested in integration but would probably move in whatever direction which would seem to give the greatest amount of stability - he is a friend of Ken Maginnis.

Cecil Walker - is also a friend of Ken Maginnis but is believed to be more interested in devolution than integration.

Clifford Forsythe - has always been described as 100 per cent behind Jim Molyneaux but has recently expressed some doubts, in private, about the style of leadership.

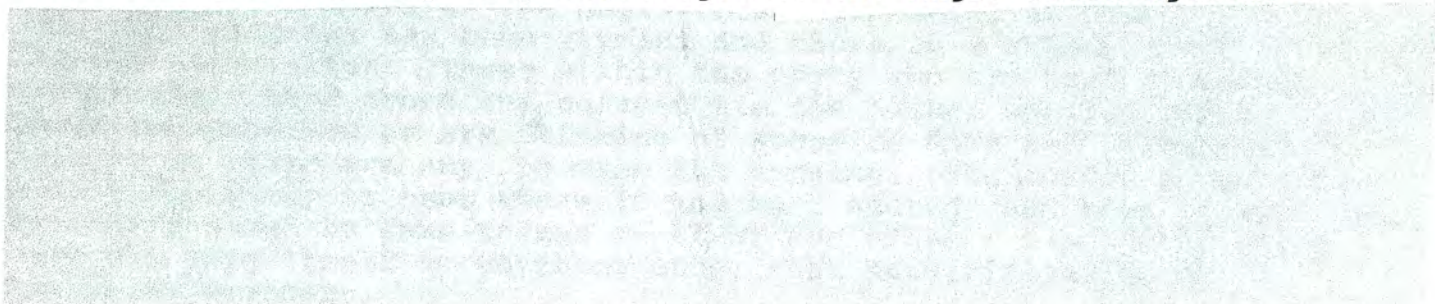
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Martin Smyth - within the party there is a view that he made a serious miscalculation not worthy of a future leader when he organised the last day of protest against the Anglo-Irish Agreement.



Willie Ross - 100 per cent behind Mr Molyneaux and is reckoned to be someone who could, if he were there, stop political progress in Eastern Europe.

Conclusion

7. This whole discussion was on a friendly basis and I am sure Mr Maginnis would not want any of this information used as it could clearly be recognised as coming from him. He was also very keen during the time he was with me to find out the "real story" behind Mr Molyneaux's bumping into the Secretary of State and I responded by saying that I really did not know very much about it other than that it had happened. I think he hopes to use this meeting in some way to embarrass Jim Molyneaux; but he clearly does not know the full details and is continuing to fish around the system to see exactly what he can find out.

8. The relationship between Mr Robinson and Mr Maginnis is interesting in that it is certainly something which has developed in the last couple of years - helped I think by the intervention of Frank Millar (former Secretary and Chief Executive of the Ulster Unionist Party now a journalist in London) who has a close relationship with each. I would not be surprised to see at some time in the future a formal alliance between them; they are both firmly committed to devolution and neither has any great hope (or, in Robinson's position, any great desire) to lead the parties of which they are currently members. There has often been talk of a re-alignment of Unionist politics; this is, I think, rather fanciful at the moment but it would not be an entirely unexpected event if such a proposition was to formulate at some point in the future.

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