

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

49/9

-35EF (VVI)

4970

FROM: Q J THOMAS, DUS(L)
3 September 1991
DUSL/MR/24821

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)

cc Paymaster General (L&B)
PS/Minister of State (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Felt
Mr Wood (L&B)
Mr McNeill
Mr D J R Hill
Mr Petch
Mr Dodds
Ms Lodge
Mr Archer, RID, FCO
Mr Blatherwick (Heads of
Mission Sectn FCO(via RID)
HM Chancery Dublin
Mr Gowan, Cabinet Office

6/7
anew definition

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: RE-LAUNCH

The Secretary of State may find it helpful to see on his return from leave the attached PAB assessment of attitudes within the Northern Ireland Parties to the prospect of fresh political talks. I endorse its conclusions. (Though much of the assessment is, realistically, discouraging, we have all seen the need to continue to probe and stimulate at first hand. Similar assessments at points in the past have been gloomy. For example last November when the process was widely regarded as "dead in the water", as the saying was.) It suggests a number of questions for further consideration which the Secretary of State may wish to work through in an early meeting with officials.

2. I also attach a check list of tactical options prepared by the Talks Secretariat which might form the second part of the agenda for any such meeting.

3. The Secretary of State has already given some preliminary views on the handling of the political development process through the next month or so, in response to Mr D J R Hill's submission of 28 August. That submission addressed the difficulty of starting the process from cold with the Secretary of State unavailable for much of the time between now and

CONFIDENTIAL

mid-October and drew attention to the desirability of stimulating some activity during September, partly to generate a sense of momentum but also to make the most effective use of the time available. We may well not be able to secure any real movement unless and until it is clear that there will not be an Autumn election but it seems sensible to establish the various parties' opening negotiating positions as soon as possible so that we can make real progress when the time comes.

4. Generating a sufficient sense of momentum and commitment to facilitate movement may not be easy, given the negative attitude of the UUP leadership; the damper thrown by the new "pre-conditions" suggested by Dr Paisley on 6 August; the distinct lack of enthusiasm for fresh talks manifested by Irish officials; and the rather half-hearted support coming from the Alliance party. Besides such "atmospherics" there is of course the sheer difficulty of negotiating - on a multi-lateral basis - a fresh basis for talks, given the participants' likely starting positions. On the positive side, there is evidence of continued popular support for talks and evidence that many within the political parties wish fresh talks to get under way. One of the lessons drawn by Churchmen and other political commentators from the disturbing terrorist incidents in August was that some means should be found to fill the political vacuum.

5. Against that background, I respectfully welcome the Secretary of State's decision to take a relatively pro-active line. I think that we need to make full use of the various channels of influence mentioned in the tactical options paper to demonstrate a determined and energetic approach.

SIGNED

Q J THOMAS
3. September 1991
OAB 6447

- 2 -
CONFIDENTIAL

NH/DUSL/MR/24821/3.9.91

CONFIDENTIAL

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: TACTICAL OPTIONS

1. This paper seeks to provide a checklist of the tactical options available to us in seeking to make progress towards agreement on a basis for fresh political talks. Some items are already "in the programme" but are included so that the various elements of a strategy for promoting fresh talks can be viewed in the round.

2. The tactical options available to us include:

- a) The BIA Conference, 6-8 September. The Secretary of State has already agreed that we should produce speaking notes with a positive and determined tone for the benefit of those Irish Government representatives, Northern Ireland politicians, journalists and other opinion formers present;
- b) Briefing and Media Campaign. This tone could be picked up and reinforced in briefing politicians and journalists in Northern Ireland, the Republic and Great Britain. A couple of well placed articles or a programme of unattributable background briefing by Ministers or senior officials might be appropriate, perhaps towards the end of September;
- c) An initial round of meetings with the Northern Ireland Party Leaders. Given the diary pressures there would be advantage in seeking to fix dates for these meetings as soon as possible after the Secretary of State's return from leave. The aim would be to take stock of the parties' positions and, in particular, to start the process of re-educating the Unionist leaders about the necessity of following the 3-stranded approach if they are to secure their objectives. (The Secretary of State agreed to seek a meeting with the Unionist leaders though

CONFIDENTIAL

it now looks doubtful if this can be arranged before the IGC on 13 September.) For the reasons identified in the PAB Assessment it could be advantageous to seek an early meeting with Dr Alderdice. The timing of a meeting with the SDLP can be considered after the IGC;

- d) The Minister of State's dinner with Northern Ireland politicians. This certainly provides an opportunity to encourage forward movement using a channel other than the Secretary of State. If it were held after an initial round of meetings with the party leaders the Secretary of State could endorse its objectives and invite the party leaders to view it as a useful step towards fresh talks. The proposed dinner might identify some openings towards a basis for fresh talks, and could in any case help in fostering relationships, re-building the sense that fresh talks could bring real benefits to all and re-asserting the logic of the three-stranded approach;
- e) Discussion with Mr Collins. There will of course be an 'Adare' - type meeting within the Conference on 13 September. Since the Secretary of State will probably not by then have met the Unionist leaders, we may need to seek a free-standing Adare - type meeting later in the month.
- f) A further round of meetings with the Northern Ireland Parties;
- g) Speech to the Conservative Party Conference (on 9 October). The Conference may settle the issue of whether or not there is to be a November election, which should remove one element of current uncertainty..

CONFIDENTIAL

h) There may be scope for a separate political development speech, either to a British audience or in Northern Ireland, setting out the case for fresh three-stranded talks. We might review the need for such a speech during September.

3. A possible target timetable is attached.

CONFIDENTIAL

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: RE-LAUNCH

Possible Timetable

September

6-8 BIA Conference
10/11 ? meeting with the Alliance Party, in Belfast
13 IGC
19/20 Meeting with Unionist leaders
w/b 23 Minister of State hosts dinner for leading NI politicians
30 Sept) ·
or) Adare meeting/further meetings with NI parties
2/4 Oct)

October

9 Speech to Conservative party Conference

- 6 -
CONFIDENTIAL

NH/DUSL/MR/24821/3.9.91

CONFIDENTIAL

POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIVISION: ASSESSMENT

THE POLITICAL "TALKS" SCENE

1. This note assesses the political talks scene in Northern Ireland in August 1991, some eight weeks after the Secretary of State brought the talks process to a close. Since many of the main protagonists have been on holiday and/or operating in low gear, July and August have been exceptionally quiet following the intense activity during May and June. The note therefore is inevitably impressionistic and in many areas raises questions rather than gives definitive answers. It also concentrates on the Unionists, since they hold the key to any resumption of political talks during the Autumn.

2. The note sets out PAB's assessment of the position of each of the party leaders, considers key views within each of the parties, looks at two other aspects of unionism - extreme and the wider community - and assesses the effect which an impending General Election is likely to have. The note concludes with a number of key questions which need to be addressed in order to assist prospects for a successful outcome to a new talks process.

THE PARTY LEADERS

3. John Hume is exasperated by the behaviour of the Unionists at Stormont, but is probably ready for one more go. He reacted cautiously but positively to the Dungannon speech and has since repeated on RTE his hope that the process can begin again. He would in any event find it politically difficult to walk away from any process which had any chance of securing a settlement; although sooner or later he may decide that the game is not worth the candle and switch to another approach. He is astute enough to have worked out that time is on his side and he will be loath to participate in anything which might make his vision harder to achieve or which he thinks is wasting time. Given his commitment to the Anglo-Irish Agreement he would find it difficult to accept an open-ended gap in

CONFIDENTIAL

Intergovernmental Conference meetings as the price for Unionist participation in a further round of talks. He might contemplate a fudge on the gap. However he has never really been convinced that the Unionist leaders want to do business and their behaviour in Stormont and to some extent since has reinforced his scepticism. He will not be as sympathetic to Unionist preconditions as he might have been before and will not want to reopen issues agreed in the last Talks about Strand 2. He continues to believe that facilitating an end to violence is a first priority and he is far from convinced that the Talks process as currently structured will achieve that. He may at some point come to the conclusion that the political movement track will best suit his ends.

4. John Alderdice will agree in the final analysis to a re-launch of the process. But given his experiences over the past few months he is likely to be less accommodating than previously and in particular will probably be disinclined to help the process through any new Unionist preconditions which he views as unreasonable. He might well dig his heels in and insist that the ground rules had already been sorted out; some effort on the part of the Secretary of State will be needed in order to secure his full co-operation. One feature of the now concluded Talks was a developing relationship between Alderdice and Hume; although they differ widely in matters of policy they did develop a close working relationship and Alderdice was as exasperated as Hume was with the Unionists. They may well display a united front in future procedural wrangling with them. Alderdice has also indicated privately that he does not hold out much prospect for progress before a General Election.

5. Alderdice and to some extent Hume may well take the line that once a further "gap" or some similar mechanism has been identified HMG should not engage in a continuing round of negotiations on issues which were settled in the last Talks ie Strand 2 Chairman, venue and procedures but rather should, as it were, issue an ultimatum covering these points and challenge the Unionists to refuse to participate.

CONFIDENTIAL

6. In many ways however it is the Unionist leaders who hold the key to a resumption. James Molyneaux is said to be relieved that the recent Talks, which in his view had a "flawed structure", came to an end without an agreement. He said as much in a letter to the Secretary of State dated 5 August. At a demonstration on 10 August he maintained that Northern Ireland required stability and not "high-wire circus acts". His strategic aim remains to enhance Northern Ireland's position within the Union by arriving at structures which link it more organically with London. Current UUP planning appears to be based around a "Scottish" model involving better Westminster procedures and more genuine local representation on Boards and Quangos. He is interested in good relations with the Republic but on a 'friendly neighbour' basis within the 1980 totality of relationships concept. The vital question is whether he has any intention of allowing himself to be persuaded to participate meaningfully at a conference table along the lines of the previous one - by Paisley, by elements within his own party, or by the wider unionist community. He shows no real enthusiasm for the prospects of a further round of talks. He is said to be convinced that a General Election will come in the Autumn and is likely to remain so convinced until the Conservative Party Conference is over - though even if he does not genuinely believe this he may use this spectre as an excuse for immobility. The fact that Mr Molyneaux's speech of 31 August, to the Royal Black Preceptory, was silent on political development may also be seen as indicating a lack of personal enthusiasm.

7. His letter of 5 August to the Secretary of State is on the face of it a hard line letter though it has not closed the door completely perhaps. It refers to "little purpose in renewing discussions while the AIA and Articles 2&3 remain in force". It is significant too that while Josias Cunningham, President of the UUC is a co-signatory of that letter other unionists who were delegates to the talks and to whom I have spoken were not consulted beforehand about the letter and indeed have not been made aware of its contents since.

CONFIDENTIAL

8. Ian Paisley is more difficult to fathom. Since the Talks he has remained quiet, save only for breaking cover spectacularly in a Belfast Telegraph article on 6 August which appeared to set impossible conditions for a resumption, and which took his Deputy Leader by surprise. His remarks are capable of being interpreted either as a sign that he is finished with the process or as an opening bid in the bargaining for a new package, the latter theory perhaps being consistent with the fact that the following day's Irish Times put a much softer interpretation on what he had said. The whole episode, however it is to be interpreted, showed something of the man's impulsiveness. Paisley's strategic aim, and indeed his attitude to the recent Talks, remains obscure; it may be that he trims to suit the circumstances of the moment, or that he is conscious of the looming General Election and wishes to keep his options open and avoid committing himself until the ground on which he has to do battle with the UUP becomes clear. The SDLP believe that Paisley's press interview in August was deliberate in so far as it laid down preconditions and that it was intended to act as a hook from which he cannot shift.

9. But there have been clear indications that he is very aware of his religious fundamentalists, who are against any political compromise, and instinctively favours them over the career politicians such as Robinson. This was apparent in the relative dominance of McCrea during the Talks. It also comes across in the "New Protestant Telegraph", a monthly newspaper which gives its address as DUP Headquarters on the Albertbridge Road and whose July/August edition contained a leader phrased in biblical terms praising Paisley (and Molyneaux) for avoiding the cunning traps set by the NIO. Paisley was a clergyman before he was a politician and he will not want to offend his church followers. If it comes down to a stark choice Paisley is more likely to block political progress than damage his church. He was deeply affected by some serious conflicts within his church raised by fears that he was "selling" out at the talks. There are no clear signs at present that Paisley

CONFIDENTIAL

has the will to risk taking on his church followers and give them a clear lead to accept changes which many find difficult to accept. Both Hume and Alderdice blamed Paisley - not Molyneaux - for the last Talks coming to an end.

10. It is clear that Molyneaux provides some stability in the Paisley/Molyneaux relationship. He seems to be the more cunning and steady operator, and he also knows where he wants to end up. But in order to maintain Unionist unity, he has to take Paisley's views into account; Paisley also has the charisma and popular personal support which Molyneaux lacks. Given that it will be difficult for HMG to shift Molyneaux directly it is still worth working on the more unpredictable and volatile DUP leader as a means of loosening up his UUP colleague. Paisley is also the key factor in selling any political package to the wider unionist community; more than Molyneaux he is the authentic voice of gut unionism. So long as Paisley's energy and persuasive powers remain strong any deal which he opposes will not stick. It follows therefore that if Paisley is not committed to seeking a deal the process will not make much progress.

11. Neither leader shows any signs of relinquishing his position. When the time does come we think that Paisley would like McCrea to succeed him; the UUP succession is likely to be between Ross, Smyth and Taylor. Of the three UUP candidates Ross and Smyth are lesser versions of Molyneaux, whereas Taylor is something of a loose cannon. But any planning for the next year or so can effectively discount a change in Unionist leadership.

12. For the sake of completeness, the other Unionist leader is James Kilfedder. But his support is personal and localised, and he is distrusted by the leaders of the larger parties. He has little or no influence with them and they would resent his being given a higher profile.

CONFIDENTIAL

THE POLITICAL PARTIES

13. The SDLP are behind Hume; the party as a whole trusted his judgment during the Talks and will do so again. There is no apparent dissatisfaction with his leadership, although there are those in positions of some influence (for example Sean Farren and Michael Boyd) who feel that he is a little too cautious and negative; they will, as they have done before, keep him up to the mark if they feel he is not being positive enough in seeking an accommodation if one is available but they will not challenge him on fundamentals. Mallon and McGrady hold diverging views on some issues but are as sceptical about Unionist motives as their leader. The party is well-disciplined on key policy issues if somewhat disorganised on others. Hume reads and manages his colleagues well. During the Talks it was noticeable that he took pains to consult his party colleagues on most issues. For the foreseeable future the SDLP is likely to act as a unit in supporting Hume on the big issues. Apart from Hume, Mark Durkan and, to a lesser extent, Dennis Haughey remain the other two strategists. They are both also exasperated by the Unionists' performance.

14. There is little real talent in the Alliance Party apart from Alderdice himself. He is thus unlikely to feel any pressure from his membership, especially now that he is more openly drawing attention to the shortcomings of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. His style of leadership is becoming almost presidential, and provided he abides by the party's founding principles - which encompass the search for consensual devolution - he has a free hand.

15. Given that formally it is the political manifestation of the Ulster Unionist Council and that each constituency has its own "Party", decision making in the UUP is necessarily complex. As a party it is oriented towards Westminster; only a few MPs were in the delegation and the UUP MPs have little to gain personally from a successful conclusion to any talks. They are thus unlikely to be of much use in putting pressure on the leader. The delegation members

CONFIDENTIAL

in favour of making progress appeared to be Nicholson, Empey, Maginnis, Allen, McGimpsey and Donaldson, with Cunningham and Smyth as doubtfuls (indeed Smyth has recently come out against Talks before the next election) and Trimble hard to read but possibly more for than against. For various reasons those in the first category lacked the standing or personality to go against their leader, preferring to mutter among themselves and occasionally to us. Any inclination they might have had to play a more forward role in the future will have been tempered by the good press Molyneaux has been receiving in the various unionist journals. In terms of influencing the party leader they may therefore now be in a weaker position than before the Talks, although Maginnis - who is not a star performer - will continue to press. John Taylor, something of a maverick, might also be in favour of making progress [redacted]

[redacted] Molyneaux's hold on the party has certainly not been weakened by his stance during the Talks and no one is willing to risk breaking ranks in an organisation which sets great store by loyalty, particularly since there will have to be leadership succession within the next five years or so. He plays his cards very close to his chest and each of his followers knows that to oppose him, particularly if it appears to be the result of talking to the NIO, is to court marginalisation and possible political suicide.

16. The DUP is not a structured political party. With Paisley as its founder and leader the only meaningful division is between the religious and the secular members. But Paisley is currently volatile and the very lack of a formal structure on occasions renders him open to pressure from within. However his position depends on not moving too far away from his grass roots supporters and religious followers. Taking the secular members first, it is now apparent that Robinson, despite (or perhaps because of) what he is prepared to say to us in private, cannot shift Paisley as much as we had thought, at least in the short term. Nonetheless he remains our chief hope of keeping Paisley in play. Dodds is highly intelligent, and wants movement not least to further his own career;

CONFIDENTIAL

but he is not a positive leader and will not break with Paisley, on whose patronage he depends. Wilson is too much an opportunist [redacted]

[redacted]. During the Talks he was put firmly back into his box by his leader, and stayed there. The two party members who appeared to gain in standing during the process were McCrea and Vitty; McCrea now seems to be emerging as the heir apparent (certainly Robinson believes so) and both represent trustworthy hard-line loyalism in contrast to those who are mavericks or political careerists. Paisley may well be more likely to listen to them than to Robinson; it would be worth making some effort to cultivate them.

EXTREME LOYALISM

17. Some Unionist politicians are said to maintain contact with more extreme loyalist groupings; there is some speculation which suggests that a leading DUP member may have been instrumental in setting up the ULCC ceasefire during the Talks. But there is no firm evidence that the extremist organisations in themselves exert any direct influence on the political leadership; indeed a letter immediately before the Talks suggesting that the paramilitary leaders and the Unionist parties get together to concert a common line received extremely short shrift from Molyneaux and so far as we know the DUP did not respond positively to this suggestion. However a negative reaction from the loyalist paramilitaries to any political accommodation - particularly if they feel that the Dublin dimension is too strong - would exert an indirect pressure on the Unionists and this pressure is likely to be of more concern to the DUP than the UUP.

THE WIDER UNIONIST COMMUNITY

18. It is not clear to what extent the Unionist leaders are influenced by the wider community. On the DUP side, if Empey's account of a fracas in North Antrim is to be believed, Paisley is unwilling to go beyond what he feels the Free Presbyterians would accept. He is also probably wary of being outflanked, and must be mindful that his entire career has been built on being the most

CONFIDENTIAL

ultra of mainstream loyalist politicians. Any pressure other leading DUP members are receiving from their constituencies is unlikely to be in the direction of compromise. His party is also in decline in comparison to the UUP and his battle becomes more acute the nearer we are to a General Election.

19. The UUP "constituency" is more complex. The party is heavily dependent on the Orange Order and Royal Black Institution for finance and practical support; indeed the position of the former in particular is still enshrined in its structure and constitution. Some degree of structural modernisation is in hand but given the strength of the vested interests involved it is likely to take some years to come to fruition. The monthly "Orange Standard" provides some indication of the messages the UUP leadership is receiving and also what they are thinking; the May edition gave prominence to the Grand Lodge's statement on the Talks which called for better relationships within Northern Ireland and between the peoples of the two islands but warned against anything which might weaken Ulster's position within the UK. Nothing Molyneaux has said since, in public or in private, suggests that he is taking this mandate lightly.

20. The editorial in the August issue asserted that most Nationalists preferred to remain in the UK, that new and different ground rules (excluding the Republic) were necessary for any resumption of the Talks and that the Brooke initiative derived from misplaced paternalism. All this chimes closely with the known thoughts of Molyneaux and those close to him. The Loyal Orders mean a lot to him personally and he is assiduous in visiting as many Lodges and Preceptories as possible and garnering the views of their leading members. It is with them that he probably feels most comfortable, and their opinions he sets most store by.

21. Any influence which the wider, less political, unionist community might have on the leadership is harder to fathom. Some, particularly in middle-class areas, are virtually alienated from politics. Others, for example churchmen such as Archbishop Eames,

actively and publicly support moves to bring about an accommodation, and certainly came out in favour of a positive attitude to the Talks. But these views, although well reported in the media and doubtless made privately to the leadership, did not appear unduly to influence Molyneaux's and Paisley's attitudes during and since the process. The most recent indications of wider opinion, as evidenced in the Belfast Telegraph leader of 30 July, are that new talks will not work so are not worth bothering with until after a General Election. The prevailing mood in the unionist population as a whole seems to be one of apathy and scepticism and a continuing insecurity in terms of seeking a political accommodation; if not in day to day living.

SINN FEIN

22. Although not a constitutional political party, the position of Sinn Fein must be taken into account. They are certainly a factor in John Hume's calculations and there remains the possibility - brought into sharper focus by Adams' apparent demarche on 21 August - that they might seek to come in from the cold. The Unionists will be watching this area closely and be quick to detect any apparent softening of our stance towards them.

THE GENERAL ELECTION FACTOR

23. A General Election is now less than a year away. UUP and DUP candidates will fight each other in safe unionist areas. Local issues and personality factors will matter greatly, but the UUP are likely to campaign on their existing ticket of being solid and dependable for the Union and against NIO trickery. The possibility of major Parliamentary change within a fairly short timescale will encourage Molyneaux to play things long. The August Orange Standard - quoted above, also indicates that Unionists should not be too concerned about a Labour Government which it says, while it has a policy of unity with consent, will be pragmatic as Labour Governments have been in the past. The DUP, whose star has been declining since the early 1980s, are less predictable. They will need to differentiate themselves in some way from their larger

rivals and this may increase their volatility over the next few months. They may wish to appear more positive and flexible in pursuit of their acknowledged goal of devolution, but they will be extremely wary of being outflanked by the UUP on the issues of the Agreement and a role for Dublin. (The AIA/Dublin involvement issue is the single most important one for all those on the unionist spectrum.) This may mean an attempt to get the best of both worlds by keeping talks, or the possibility thereof, in play but avoiding any conclusions.

24. The UUP leader and some key others are convinced that a General Election will come soon and are therefore unlikely to commit themselves to any firm discussions until October - by which time the question of any Autumn Election will be settled one way or another. The General Election also weighs heavily in Hume's calculations. He maintains some contact with key Labour politicians; the Labour party policy on unity by consent is close to his line and he is close enough to Haughey to be ready to go along with any sign that the latter wants to play things long. Finally, the General Election does allow party leaders the opportunity to avoid taking risky and difficult decisions without being criticised too much for delaying tactics.

THE "BROOKE" FACTOR

25. One other aspect which we must take into account is the "Brooke factor" and how it might work. Parties assume that, whatever the Election result, the chances of Mr Brooke remaining Secretary of State are relatively low. Indeed some still refer to the fact that in winding up the last Talks the Secretary of State referred to the possibility of new Talks involving him or his successor. This prospect could work in favour of a return to the table since we know that the Secretary of State's personal standing remains high with all parties and the way in which he brought the last Talks to an end reinforced this perception. It may be thought that this factor is not strong enough by itself to reduce any preference for a basically

CONFIDENTIAL

passive approach unless it were accompanied by a determined approach by HMG to finding a settlement. A determined further effort by this Secretary of State might just create a situation which many would find difficult to respond to negatively.

KEY QUESTIONS

26. The experience of the past few months, especially observation of the parties in action at close quarters, shows that effective power in the short to medium term rests in the hands of the leaders, who on the Unionist side at least may well for a number of reasons err on the side of caution in order to maintain their positions. There is no evidence to suggest that either Unionist leader felt comfortable during the Talks; on the contrary they are likely to have been relieved that the process went no further than it did and that they were not called upon to break the habits of a lifetime. For any resumption to succeed Molyneaux personally must be shifted from his basic inclinations, possibly by use of UUP and DUP politicians below the leaders.

27. A series of questions immediately suggest themselves:-

- (i) We believe that in the final analysis the SDLP and Alliance would be content to see the process begin again but are they prepared to do so as willingly as before?
- (ii) How can we convince John Hume that the process is worth continuing with in a positive spirit?
- (iii) Molyneaux might well rather not be involved at all; if so how can we encourage him to become so involved?
- (iv) What, if anything, is Paisley's long-term strategy and how does this affect his attitude to a resumption of the talks process? Is he going to stick to his August conditions.

CONFIDENTIAL

- (v) We used to consider the dynamics of the Paisley/Molyneaux relationship? How can we use this to encourage positive movement?
- (vi) In the final analysis, the Unionist leaders' calculations seem to be more affected by their more extreme activists and supporters than by the unionist community in its widest sense? Can we do more to encourage wider public opinion to put pressure on the politicians?
- (vii) Can we do more to encourage Paisley to be willing to lead his followers, particularly his church followers, to accept changes which they are reluctant to accept?
- (viii) How can we remove the General Election "excuse" from the agenda?
- (xi) Can we use the "Brooke factor" to good effect and does this mean that we have to adopt a more determined approach and, in the final analysis, to be ready to set out an ultimatum on those matters which were agreed in the last Talks?
- (x) If we are to get the process going again is there any way in which we could restructure the configurations to make progress easier?

CONCLUSION

28. There are people of goodwill on all sides, but whose voices may have little chance of influencing the political leaders, who want us to try again. But given the known views of Molyneaux and Paisley, and their key position a resumption is unlikely to be easy.

29. However we are committed to try for a restart. The public expects it. The paramilitaries would gloat if we did not. And we may succeed or at least add one more layer of political

CONFIDENTIAL

understanding into the situation. Given the general expectations it is important that we move or at least signal a move in September. Before that we need to address the questions above and be prepared to meet the various leaders again with these questions in mind.

[Signed]

D G McNEILL
Political Affairs Division
Ext 2238 SH
30 AUGUST 1991

- 14 -

CONFIDENTIAL

RG/11052/DUSL/MR/24821/3.9.91