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MM/46/9

FROM: M T H MAXWELL
AS CENT SEC
20 SEPTEMBER 1993

cc PS/Mr Atkins (DED,DOE&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Williams - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Cooke - B
Mrs Collins - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mr Rickard - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr May - B
Mr Durbin - B
Mrs Kenny
HMA, Dublin - B
Mr Archer, RID - B
(without attachments)

M. J. of Dublin

*Mrs Murphy
To note*

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L)

NORTH WEST REGION CROSS-BORDER GROUP: CONFERENCE ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH WEST OF IRELAND

1. We have been alerted to the fact that a member of the organising committee of the above conference (which the Secretary of State and the Taoiseach are both due to attend on 19 November 1993) is Mr Mitchell McLaughlin, a prominent Sinn Fein Councillor on Derry City Council.
2. Mr McLaughlin's membership of the committee clearly presents us with some difficulties, particularly, as is likely, the Committee will wish to be introduced to the Secretary of State and the Taoiseach: there is also the likelihood of a photocall involving Mr McLaughlin. The proposed question and answer session after the speeches of the Taoiseach and the Secretary of State may also be made more difficult.

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3. It is not considered necessary for the Secretary of State to withdraw from the Conference, unless there are overwhelming security considerations: SPOB or Liaison may wish to advise on this aspect. However, we will have to make it clear to the Cross Border Group that the Secretary of State and the Taoiseach must be spared political embarrassment arising from Mr McLaughlin's involvement in the conference arrangements. I have also alerted the British Side of the Secretariat (Mrs Collins) to Mr McLaughlin's membership of the organising Committee: she in turn will alert the Irish.
4. I am due to meet Ms Shirley McKay, Development Officer of the North West Region Cross Border group, on Wednesday 22 September to discuss arrangements for the Conference, and will seek to find out more about the arrangements on the day. In the meantime, if there are any points which the Secretary of State would wish me to make to the organisers, I would be happy to do so.
5. Finally, the Secretary of State will wish to note that Mr McLaughlin met Mr John Bruton TD during the recent visit of the British/Irish Interparliamentary Body to Londonderry. There was some press comment about Mr Bruton's handshake with Mr McLaughlin (see attached extract from last Friday's edition of the Irish Press).

[Signed MTH Maxwell]

M T H MAXWELL

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Mr Maxwell
Watkins

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY THE BRITISH IRISH INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
BODY COMMITTEE B 15-16 SEPTEMBER 1993

I received a telephone call this morning from Steve Priestly (incoming House of Commons Clerk) about the recent visit by BIIPB's Committee B (EC Affairs).

He alerted me to the attached press article ("Bruton meets SF Councillor") which appeared in this morning's Irish Times. Apparently the article is causing quite a stir in Dublin and acute embarrassment to Mr John Bruton who condemned President Robinson for shaking hands with Gerry Adams.

I understand that Mr Bruton is to issue a statement which will appear in the press this evening and that he is intending to write to the British Government about the matter.

Cecille Fairfield

C FAIRFIELD

17 September 1993

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