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FROM: D J WATKINS
D/CENT SEC
12 August 1997

Mr Carvill, DENI
Mr Semple, DFP
Mr Spence, DOE

cc Mr Hunter, DFP
Mr Canavan
Mr Lavery o/r - O
Mr Maccabe - O
Mr Beeton, REL - O
Mrs Devlin - O
Miss Steele - O
Ms Mapstone, IPL - O
Mr Johnston - O

CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES FOR UNIONISTS: PART II

1. Mr Hill copied to you his submission of 31 July attaching a checklist of "measures to build confidence within the pro-Union community" passed to Dr Mowlam by Mr Trimble. At a meeting yesterday it was agreed that the NIO would draw together a submission commenting on each of the measures specified in the attachment to Mr Hill's submission. The purpose of this minute is to seek commentary from you on measures which fall within your responsibility.
2. I should therefore be grateful if you could provide brief commentary on the following points as allocated:-

Operation of the Forum:

Mr Johnston (Cent Sec) to deal;

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Local Government:

DOE in conjunction with PAB to describe where we stand in relation to a power of general competence and on the DOE's attitude to allocating minor functions to Councils.

Community and Cultural Development:

I would be grateful if **Mr Canavan** would handle this in conjunction with DOE, DFP (IFI) and others as appropriate in relation to the protestant community's access to schemes. CCRU should also deal with the cultural development point in conjunction (I presume) with DFP on the Thiepval War Memorial point.

School Funding:

I would be grateful for DENI input on this.

Quangos:

I would be grateful if Miss Steele in conjunction with Mrs Devlin would handle this. ✓

EER/SACHR:

I would be grateful if CCRU in conjunction with REL would handle this.

3. It would not be sensible to be prescriptive about the format of commentary but I suggest that IPL might appreciate a brief (no more than one page) description of where each issue stands,

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progress in developing each issue and an indication of any notable pros and cons. The purpose, as set out in para 4 of Mr Hill's submission, is to enable Ministers to consider what might be said over the next few weeks - with the period up to 15 September being obviously significant - in respect of each suggested measure.

- 11 Aug · 4. The deadline for the composite IPL submission has been somewhat relaxed. Could I ask you, please, to have your replies with me no later than close of play on ~~Thursday~~, 28 August, copied to Ms Mapstone (NIO(L)) (since our move to Parliament Buildings at around that time makes it uncertain as to how or when Central Secretariat could deal with the replies itself).

[Signed: DJW]

D J WATKINS

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FROM: D J R HILL
CONSTITUTIONAL & POLITICAL DIVISION
31 JULY 1997

cc: PS/Mr Murphy (L&B, DFP)
PS/Mr Ingram (L&B, DED)
PS/Mr Worthington (L, DHSS&DENI)
PS/Lord Dubs (L, DANI&DOE)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Steele
Mr Semple, DFP
Mr Spence, DOE
Mr Carvill, DENI
Mr Stephens o/r
Mr Bell
Mr Leach
Mr Watkins
Mr Brooker
Mr Maccabe
Mr Lavery
Mr Perry
Mr Canavan, CCRU
Mrs Collins
Mr Buchanan
Mr Whysall
Mr Lamont, RID
HMA Dublin
Mr Holmes, No 10
Mr Sanderson, Cabinet Office

PS/Secretary of State (L&B)

CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES FOR UNIONISTS: PART II

At the end of this morning's meeting with the Secretary of State on the Northern Ireland legislative programme Mr Trimble produced the attached checklist of "measures to build confidence within the pro-Union community". They must presumably be seen as additional to the points in John D Taylor's letter of 23 July to the Prime Minister, which has now been answered.

2. There was no discussion of the attached paper, but the clear implication is that a positive response on all or any of these items by early September would make it easier

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of the UUP to support the Government's approach to the political negotiations and (conceivably) to enter substantive negotiations alongside Sinn Féin.

3. Obviously it would be wrong to change the substance of the Government's policy position in any of these areas simply in order to meet the UUP's wishes, and it could be tactically unwise to make concessions on timing or presentation in circumstances where there was no guarantee of a return. However, I understand that the Secretary of State would at least like to know where we stand on all these issues before the end of August, and what could be said to Mr Trimble about them.

4. The Political Directorate, in liaison with Central Secretariat, will therefore (as you have requested) pulled together a report for submission by 22 August, incorporating advice on what might be said or done over the following 2 to 3 weeks in respect of these proposed confidence building measures.

(Signed: David Hill)

D J R HILL
Constitutional & Political Division
11 Millbank, ☎ 6591

Measures to build confidence within the pro-union community
31 July 1997

1. Greater openness and transparency with regard to the operation of the Intergovernmental Conference and the Secretariat.

2. More co-operation with the Forum by NIO and facilitation of its restructuring with more committee work and Forum Plenaries limited to receipt of committee reports and general debates say once a month.

Int. Sec.
(Lanning)

3. Local government

(1) implementation of Lord Dubs' suggestion of giving Councils a power of general competence and enhancement of their economic development role (see memo herewith);
(ii) a more co-operative attitude by DoE to minor functions for councils eg over car parking in towns

Car Secy
PAB/ML
(program of whs. ply)

4. Community and Cultural development

It is clear that the protestant community is disadvantaged with regard to developments in the above areas. This is partly due to a reluctance to apply, a lack of information concerning the various schemes and of sophistication in framing proposals to meet them, and a belief that these schemes are (designedly?) framed and operated to benefit others.

DoE
IF1/OF1

A more pro-active approach by the NIO is needed to ensure fairness and parity of funding, particularly on heritage matters where the generous provision for Irish language and culture is in stark contrast to the lack of recognition of Ulster-Scots heritage and culture. Note the disgrace that Northern Ireland cannot find £15,000 per annum to fund adequately its national war memorial at Thiepval. It should be open to the public as it was designed to be and was until the mid 1970s.

CCRU
DFP?

5. Implementation of the Coopers and Lybrand report on school funding.

DFM

6. Quangos

To reduce the democratic deficit, more public representatives should be appointed so that at least half the members of those quangos that are discharging a governmental function are elected representatives. Those appointed should be

Int Sec

cross party/ cross community in proportion to electoral strength and the individuals should be appointed after consultation with the relevant party leader.

7. Greater openness and fairness in the review of Fair Employment legislation. SACHR is not balanced in community/political terms - see the unfair treatment of Dermot Nesbitt and his dissenting report. *Cent Sec*

8. Assurance on legally held firearms

9. Implementation of assurances on parades legislation to Loyal Orders.

10. Vigorous implementation of decommissioning time table in Government clarification to plenary of 16 July.

Power of General Competence

In his speech on the 17 June Environment Minister Lord Dubs stated "The possibility of legislation to give Councils in Northern Ireland 'a power of general competence' to do what they consider appropriate in the interests of their district and its people, in order to bring this proposal to fruition a working party which would include District Councillors should be set up to consider the matter and report in 6 months.

Economic Development

We seek to enhance the powers of Local Council in line with other Councils in Great Britain i.e. powers to acquire or hold land for the purposes of economic development, to carry out work on its own land to encourage such development.

To return to local Councils planning powers which would greatly enhance the prospects of economic development by allowing Councils to enter into partnerships with the private sector.