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DRAFT

FROM: D E SMITH
CPL DIVISION
15 FEBRUARY 1993

NOTE OF DUS(L) STOCKTAKING MEETING : 12 FEBRUARY 1993

Those Present:

Mr Thomas
Mr Wood
Mr Brooker
Mr Cooke
Mr Hill
Mr Smith

Mr Williams
Mr Watkins
Mr Dodds
Mr Maccabe
Mr Rickard

Political Development

Mr Maccabe summed up the general feeling amongst the public and political parties as "gloom, doom and apathy". In private talks with PAB, all the parties saw problems in restarting the talks - though the SDLP were more upbeat, most recent conversations with Brid Rogers and Dennis Haughey had been less enthusiastic. A "Spotlight" programme had highlighted Protestant's feelings of alienation. Mr Watkins added that there was a strong sense of anxiety and helplessness amongst Unionists which was leading to the random sectarian violence we were witnessing. Most, generally, had a feeling that the constitutional politicians had failed. Mr Dodds noted that whilst the long-term aspiration of the Irish and the Northern Nationalists remained a United Ireland, HMG did not publicly take an opposite view - this led, in part, to the Unionists disillusion which the Irish saw as the beginning of their acceptance of the "inevitable". Mr Watkins added that this was actually when they became their most intractable. Mr Wood said that nobody on the media scene believed anything would happen before the May elections. There seemed to be a lack of confidence within the media in the political system. The Secretary of State, it was noted, was setting great stock by his public walk-arounds and "meeting the people".

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2. Mr Williams felt that the May elections were not a genuine reason for no talks: he saw no signs of enthusiasm for the resumption after May. Mr Thomas wondered what was available to us to encourage a positive outlook apart from the Secretary of State's speech programme. As to carrying on with the talks process, Mr Hill commented that the needs of the people of Northern Ireland demanded that we try to get back to the table, but that we would need to convince the parties that there is something to be gained for them - we could also expect a better performance from the Irish. Mr Maccabe, agreeing with the "Mallon" theory, believed the major issues, Security and Articles 2 and 3, needed to be addressed. Mr Watkins was concerned about the concept of "travelling hopefully", and felt that HMG needed to be more positive and set out a concrete game-plan.

*QT commissioned a 'game-plan' rep. from
JTH - as recognised by OIRA.*

3. On other "political" matters, Mr Hill reported that a presentation on the Education proposals would be made on 16 February at (?) Parliament Buildings: PAB would be present should anyone from the parties wish to discuss the talks process in the margins. He noted that there were renewed pressures for a Northern Ireland Select Committee and for changes to the Orders in Council process. The forthcoming White Papers on constitutional developments in both Scotland and Wales might, it was thought, impinge in some way on Northern Ireland. It was noted that Miss Gillian Harrison would be joining CPL on 16 February. Mr Cooke ran through the current position on various Talks Policy papers.

International

4. Latest intelligence about the US plans for a Peace Envoy make it clear that the new administration are unable to treat it purely as an election promise though they do believe that they are on a hook. However, it is believed they are looking more to a

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fact-finding mission, possibly led by Speaker Foley - the Secretary of State is not keen even for this proposal. The Secretary of State intends to visit the US, current plans being for the first week in May. Mr Mates is considering a visit to Canada to discuss security co-operation. There is a meeting planned for the 24 March of the Northern Ireland Overseas Information Strategy group.

Security

5. Mr Brooker reported on the latest state of play concerning the extradition cases of Brennan, Smith and Artt. It was noted that Doherty and McKee were seeking judicial review against the Secretary of State's decision not to allow the time they had spent in prison in the US to count against their sentence. 25 February has been noted as a possible date for a meeting of Working Group 2.

6. On other security matters it was noted:

- Geraldine Finucane was suing the MOD and Brian Nelson, despite already receiving £½ million for criminal injuries from the Compensation Agency;
- Three Surrey police officers involved in the Guildford Four case were being prosecuted. They have asked for the release of some 2,000 "sensitive" documents from MOD and NIO in their defence. The Secretary of State is still considering the signature of a PII certificate.
- Central TV are facing legal action over a programme in the Cooke Report series, concerning PIRA activity, and have asked NIO for help in implicating the people named in the documentary who are now suing them.
- There are various forthcoming exercises involving NIO personnel.

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Anglo-Irish

7. Mr Dodds reported that the mechanics of the recent IGC had gone smoothly (though the food was condemned by both sides!). The 19 or 22 February were possible dates for the next IGC in Belfast. A review of the logistics and the aspects of the IGC was being undertaken: the Irish were to draft a paper.

Central Secretariat

8. Mr Watkins outlined several of the papers currently under consideration in Central Secretariat: a Strand One flow chart for decision-making; a North/South Institutions paper; involvement with the NI Departments on extending N/S institutions; and, a paper from Danny McNeil reviewing the work of the Bureau in Washington.

SIGNED

D E SMITH
CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DIVISION
15 FEBRUARY 1993

CC Those Present
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Ledlie
Mr Blackwell
Mr Steele
Mr Allsop
Mr Fittall
Mr Leach
Mr Marsh
Mr Stephens

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