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① Mr. Lyons 9. 10/5  
② Mr. Evans 08. 14/5

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③ POL.

PS/Sofs (L&B)-M  
 PS/Ministers (L&B)-M  
 PS/PUS (L&B)-M  
 PS/Sir E Bell -M  
 Mr Bourn (B)-M  
 Mr Brennan  
 Mr Burns

Mr Merifield (B) -M  
 Mr Buxton (B) -M  
 Mr Gilliland Inf Servs (B) -M  
 Mr Doyne-Ditmas Ism (B) -M  
 Miss Davies Cent Sect (B) -M  
 Mr Abbott CPL  
 Mr Boys-Smith SIL  
 Mr Reeve PAB -M  
 Mr Wood Inf Servs

Mr Eyles Fo



## SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT TO DUBLIN ON 5 MAY 1983

The Secretary of State's meetings with Irish Ministers took place without officials. Mr Lyon is issuing records on the basis of full de-briefing provided by the Secretary of State immediately afterwards. While the Ministers were meeting, Mr Lyon, Mr Tatham and I had parallel discussions with Irish Officials, Mr Nally, Mr Lillis, Margaret Hennessy and Mr Burke. Many of the same points were covered. This note tries to record items and emphases which may supplement what was learned from the Ministerial discussions.

2. The general impression was that the discussions were more hard-hitting and yet positive than during Mr Barry's visit to London. While it was generally agreed that nothing could happen before the election, the Irish were seriously considering the possibilities and the difficulties about making progress thereafter. They were more aware of the difficulties of doing business with any radically different regime which might follow our election and seemed to be working on the provisional assumption that such change would not be made. They recognised that the Assembly was central to our thinking.

Mr Hesletine's Remarks

3. The row over Mr Heseltine's remarks was treated in a low key fashion, almost as if it had nothing to do with our discussions. The Irish dutifully informed us of the steps they felt obliged to take. We explained that the remarks were an off-the-cuff response

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SECRET**SECRET**

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to questions and expressed surprise that a protest was considered appropriate. We all recognized the importance the Irish attach to neutrality and did not challenge their right to pursue the policy which they thought appropriate, but it did not follow that any comment on that policy required formal protest.

#### Dealings with Sinn Fein

4. The stories that the NIO was hob-nobbing with Sinn Fein, allegedly based upon information from the SDLP and Catholic Bishops, was put to officials in the same way as to the Secretary of State and we reacted with the same incredulity. The suspicion was clearly genuine, owing much to perceptions of dealings several years ago and a belief that British Ministers thought Sinn Fein could be tamed. We said that SDLP anxieties and misunderstandings could not readily account for such an extraordinary reversal of the truth. One wondered about deliberate disinformation. There was no illusion in the NIO that chatting about drains and housing with Sinn Fein would lead the IRA away from violence. As for not arresting Mr MacGuinness, <sup>but</sup> he and Mr Adams were the two we would most like to see convicted but evidence was required.

#### The Dublin Forum

5. Officials plan that the first meeting of the Forum will be in public but thereafter its discussions should be private until the final meeting: they recognise matters may turn out otherwise. They plan a programme of smaller committees to do most of the work under the general supervision of a committee of the 4 party leaders. They are determined that the business should be over by the end of the year. Dr FitzGerald himself is said to be enthusiastic about the Forum. Mr Nally was very cynical suggesting that the outcome will be little more than a series of essays. It was not clear whether there would be a single blueprint for a united Ireland or

SECRET

SECRET

a series of options, though the latter seemed more likely. It was, however, clear that the discussions would focus on designing a united Ireland and the doubt was how far Fianna Fail would allow the difficult issues such as finance, the constitution, defence and agricultural matters to be addressed. Our suggestions that it was important to consider what should happen in the island of Ireland while consent to a united Ireland was not available were politely received but the impression we gained was that those concerned with the Forum felt that they had more than enough to do in holding the participants together in their prime purpose without taking on additional difficult and <sup>divisive</sup> ~~devisive~~ tasks.

6. There was genuine enthusiasm for obtaining a Unionist input to the Forum but acceptance that Dublin should seek this without NIO help. We mentioned the simple point that a properly publicised announcement inviting submissions and giving time for those interested to prepare them would help and that, in the first instance, people might be more ready to submit papers than attend in person.

7. Those attending the Forum will receive pay of £100 a day, plus expenses, unless they are already paid as elected representatives; this means money for the SDLP attenders only.

#### AIIC

8. The Irish regarded the meeting which has recently been arranged with Sir Robert Armstrong as a full meeting of the Steering Committee not just to discuss Encounter. They had in mind going through the Joint Studies and examining which of the topics identified could usefully be taken further. They will also want to raise <sup>the</sup> Parliamentary Body, though recognising that the chances of speedy progress are slender. On Encounter they were now ready to go ahead even hoping to have an announcement agreed in the margins of the Stuttgart Community Summit.

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SECRET

SECRET

Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle

9. There was much resentment at the note left with the Irish about patrolling. The fact that Mr Tatham's speaking note had, as is normal practice, been left with the Irish, was interpreted as a high level of protest. They also thought the language was unduly strong. We explained that it was not intended to be a high level protest. They emphasised that the planned patrol had been arranged well in advance and was not an immediate response to the Blaney-inspired newspaper article or linked to the by-election. They stressed that Ministers were upset by the terms of our protest. We responded that while both Governments made conflicting claims and some politicians in both countries were vigilant in publicly insisting that the full claim was vigorously sustained, embarrassments were virtually inevitable and the only sensible course was for our two Governments, possibly as the AHC exercise, to try and agree on a ~~border~~ <sup>border</sup> so as to remove the source of the difficulty.

Co-operation North

10. Mr Lillis professed embarrassment and puzzlement at the reluctance to continue funding Co-operation North at the previous level. The Irish had, he said, with some doubts about the competence and effectiveness of Co-operation North, been influenced to make their contribution by the enthusiasm of Mr Prior and the Prime Minister for the organisation. Funding from private organisations was now linked to the scale of funding from the Government and a reduction of 3/4 in the Government's contribution was likely to lead to a similar reduction in private funding. Whatever we may have understood about the original plan for Government funding being a once only exercise, the Irish had never been under any such illusion. They had made provision for (Irish)£50,000 this year and would find it difficult to change course. We made the usual points about the need for independence, the Treasury,

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SECRET

and the once-only nature of the original agreement but agreed to think further.

Kinsale Gas

11. The Irish professed to be encouraged by the meeting of officials a few days ago which, they said, offered new hope for an agreement. We said that, with reservations since we were not experts in this business, our understanding was that the officials here who were did not share that optimism, and the feeling was still that the odds seemed heavily against agreement much as we would like it.

The European Community and Sinn Fein

12. Mr Lillis raised again his idea that the Irish and the United Kingdom should jointly ask for the European Council to rule that the Commission officials should not see Sinn Fein. Otherwise their rules allowed them no discretion to refuse to see elected representatives. We said that the idea had been referred to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office experts and was being taken seriously, but we wondered about the legal position and about whether such a high profile effort was really the most effective means of preventing Sinn Fein gaining recognition.

S. L. Angel  
7/5 1983

G L Angel  
9 May 1983

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