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PAB/3544/DP

NOTE FOR THE RECORD



cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B  
PS/Mr Stanley (L&B) - B  
PS/PUS (L&B) - B  
PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B  
Mr Stephens - B  
Mr Burns - B  
Mr Innes - B  
Mr Spence - B  
Mr Elliott - B  
Mr Chesterton - B  
Mr Shannon - B  
Mr Wood - B  
Mr Hamilton - B  
Mr Daniell  
Mr Kirk - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Masefield - B

I spoke today to a leading unionist from the West of the Province. Part of his reason for calling was to give me an immediate direct reaction to yesterday's meeting between Hume and Adams. In his view the main consequence is likely to be that it will provide the two unionist leaders with an extra card to play in their dealings with HMG over the talks about talks and any developments flowing from those discussions. The course chosen by the unionist parties will depend on how matters progress within their discussion group but the Hume/Adams meeting could provide an ideal excuse for the leaders to withdraw from the whole exercise on the grounds that Hume is not interested in having anything to do with unionists. In effect therefore it would be just the sort of issue that could completely sabotage the whole process.

2. This contact also passed on to me the message that during the course of a meeting of Dungannon District Council on 11 January there was an exchange of strong views over security issues. As a result three nominations were made, and accepted by the individuals concerned, as being suitable for submission to the

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NIO for consideration for appointment to the Police Authority. Significantly one of the three, Councillor Anthony McGonnell, is a member of the SDLP (the others are one UUP and one DUP).

Comment

3. The reaction to the Hume/Adams meeting is predictable and some of the public comment from unionist politicians exactly matches, and reinforces, this given to me privately. The other interesting point will be to watch reaction to an SDLP Councillor allowing his name to go forward for nomination to PANI. I understand from my contact that McGonnell agreed to accept the nomination more or less by default having been pressed throughout the meeting on a number of points. It remains to be seen if he takes action to have his name removed (interestingly he has made accusations that he is being harassed by the UDR) and if not how others in his party react.

[Signed by J Alford in J McConnell's absence]

J E McCONNELL  
Political Affairs Division  
12 January 1988

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