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FROM: R O MILES  
US(Pol)

16 May 1989

cc PS/PUS (L&B) - B  
PS/Sir K Bloomfield - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Blackwell - B  
Mr J McConnell - B  
Mr Masefield - B  
Mr Shannon - Personal

MR BURNS - B

NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Having read Sir Kenneth Bloomfield's submission on the implications of the single European market for Northern Ireland, on which I have no direct comment, I feel I should draw attention to a possible gap in our long-term political thinking. So far as I am aware we have not explored the relationship between the political divide in Ireland and the development of the European idea.

2. European observers who know nothing of Northern Ireland, but have watched the miracle of reconciliation between traditional enemies in continental Europe, regard it as almost an act of faith that progress towards an united Europe, as laid down in the Treaty of Rome, must in the long-term draw the poison from the Irish quarrel as well.

3. Perhaps these observers are simply wrong. There is little or no sign of such reconciliation here, though I have seen it in the important Irish expatriate community in Luxembourg, and it may for all I know exist among younger people who have had the opportunity to travel. I am encouraged by Archbishop Eames' reported remarks to the General Synod in Dublin to the effect that Northern Ireland runs the risk of becoming an outcast if it fails to grasp the atmosphere of reconciliation which is taking place throughout the world.

4. Meanwhile, within the Government machine, we pursue three separate groups of subjects without making any connection between them:

- (a) The impact of 1992 on Northern Ireland, as discussed in Sir Kenneth Bloomfield's submission, which is seen as essentially economic, certainly not political.
- (b) "Political development", which we address from time to time at the Northern Ireland level, the all-Ireland level or the two islands level.

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- (c) The national debate on the future of Europe (PM's speech at Bruges, pension cards, language programmes, smoking bans), on all of which my impression is that the input from the NIO is less than that from - for example - the Department of the Environment.

5. If all these subjects are indeed unconnected, we are right to treat them as such. But if Europe has even a small bearing on the long-term future of the Irish problem, we in the NIO should be insisting on making the link, and demanding a major voice in the discussion of European policy.

[signed]

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