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~~P.A. 5.5842~~

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Conversation with Dr. J. Hendron SDLP on

P.A. 5.22854

3 November 1982

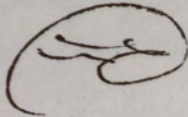
1. The SDLP assembly members met on 1 November in Dungannon. John Hume and Seamus Mallon were reappointed leader and deputy leader. Eddie McGrady will be chief whip and Dr. Hendron will remain chairman of the constituency representatives group. John Hume will appoint the remaining spokesmen.

2. The meeting reaffirmed the SDLP approach to the Assembly and decided to pursue their proposal for a Council for a New Ireland in consultation with the Southern parties. There was no formal discussion of the PSF and IIP positions but Dr. Hendron expressed the view that the SDLP would have nothing to do with the proposals of either party. He did not foresee contact between the SDLP and PSF.

3. Hume, Mallon, McGrady and Hendron saw Prior yesterday. They told the Secretary of State that they would in no circumstances participate in the assembly and reaffirmed their total opposition to the initiative. Mr. Prior said that he accepted that this was their position and made clear that he would however facilitate them in any way possible as elected representatives (access to Ministers, constituency representations etc.).

4. The SDLP explained to Mr. Prior their proposal for a Council for a New Ireland involving elected representatives Norther and South and indicated that they would be holding discussions with Southern parties to see if agreement could be reached on this proposal. The SDLP envisaged the Council as a relatively informal body which would meet for a fixed period. Mr. Prior and Lord Gowrie raised no objections to the proposal and indeed appeared to be generally positive in their attitude.

5. Anglo-Irish relations were referred to and Mr. Prior said that he would like to see an improvement in relations and expressed disappointment that his efforts to arrange a bilateral meeting had been opposed by Dublin. He wondered whether the SDLP could encourage Dublin to change its attitude on this issue.



Martin Burke
3 November 1982

c.c. PSM
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