

E.P.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CC Mr Marshall  
Mr Wyatt  
Miss Davies  
Mr Blatherwick

HCS/10/15

PUS (B & L)

As I have told you I had a visit at my home last night from Mr Bob McCartney, a senior member of the Northern Ireland Bar and Mr Herbie McCracken, a Belfast solicitor.

They explained that they had decided to respond to the initiative of Dr Garret Fitzgerald on the amendment of the Constitution of the Irish Republic. Along with two or three others they would be seeing the Taoiseach on Thursday 8 October at 11 o'clock. They hoped to see Mr Haughey at 12 noon and to publicise their activities in Dublin during the rest of the day. Another barrister, Mr Peter Smith, and a well-known Belfast businessman, Mr Gordon Smyth, will also be members of the delegation.

... I was given a copy of the attached document which it is intended to hand over to Dr Fitzgerald and later to publish. This will be presented as a response from a group of unionists who are not politicians and not involved in the affairs of any of the present political parties. The document is limited in content as it is intended to represent only phase 1. Some of the implications for Northern Ireland unionists, were the desired response obtained from the South, have been deliberately omitted.

Mr McCartney, who is clearly the leader of the group, gave me a copy of the document on the understanding that it was kept confidential until Thursday and that the initiative of the group was clearly seen not to be in any way associated with Government. I have concluded that recipients of this minute should be told what is happening and have a copy of the document and I have suggested to you that FCO and the Embassy in Dublin might be briefed. To go beyond that would I think betray the trust reposed in me.

During my discussion with Mr McCracken and Mr McCartney I tested their views on the attitudes and problems of the Unionist parties. They have considerable regard for Mr McCusker and I suspect are in touch with him. They think he has the ability to give Unionism a new direction which will help to preserve the link with Britain and take the unionist community "out of the trenches".

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It is my intention to have another discussion with Mr McCartney later this month as I think his assessment of the Dublin scene, particularly after his meeting with the Taoiseach, might be helpful in planning for the November summit. I suggest Mr Wyatt might wish to sit in on this discussion.



W E BELL

6 October 1981

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