

Mr. Leve

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Bloomfield
Mr Stephens
Mr Brennan
Mr Chesterton
Mr Merifield
Mr Carvill
Miss Elliott
Mr Lyon
Mr G Hewitt
Mr Bickham

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UNITED ULSTER LOYALIST FRONT

The United Ulster Loyalist Front held its first meeting in Portadown last night under the leadership of Mr Alan Wright. About 500 attended, including John McMichael and Andy Tyrrie of the UDA. Their presence seems to have persuaded leading members of the Official Unionist Party to stay away but the meeting was attended by DUP deputy leader, Peter Robinson.

2. Although the press were excluded, it is reported that a number of front groups are to be established across the Province and that the meeting endorsed the joint UUP/DUP "think tank" announced at the end of last week (your minute of 7 August refers). After the meeting, a statement was issued calling for "unity of purpose, strong leadership and forceful, meaningful action" to oppose the Anglo-Irish process. Mr Wright added: "The evidence is very clear that something is going on between London and Dublin and unionists will not stand by and see their country sold out".

Comment

3. The launch of the UULF has received surprisingly little publicity. At this stage, the participants seem to have no clear idea of the action they might take in the event of an Anglo-Irish deal. The involvement of the paramilitaries causes real difficulties for a number of unionists. Mr Molyneaux, in particular, will be keen to ensure that the new UUP/DUP group remains the focus for concerted unionist action but will no doubt continue to give the UULF his grudging support. The members of the Front see themselves as the 1985 equivalent of the Ulster Workers Council and, to that extent, they represent a "doomsday" organisation for whom street

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protest and civil disobedience are the natural tactics. To be successful, they will need mass support and will presumably spend the next few weeks attempting to build a sound Province-wide base. They will try to raise the political temperature and will exploit any future security incidents or renewed speculation about the Anglo-Irish process in order to increase the fears and anxieties of the unionist community.

S Hewitt

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Political Affairs Division
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