

CONFIDENTIAL

PAB/7597/DGMcN/RG

FROM: D G McNEILL, PAB
DATE: 18 NOVEMBER 1991

4205
18 NOV 1991

- cc PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Fe... - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Alston - B
- Mr Dodds - B
- Mr D J R Hill - B
- Mr Cooke - B
- Mr Archer, RID - B
- HMA Amb Dublin - B

751/11
20 NOV 1991
CENT SEC
20/11

Mr BELL - B

[Handwritten signature]

MR O HUIGINN AND IRISH ASSUMPTIONS

1. I have seen your minute of 14 November and HMA's reflections of 15 November.
2. I agree with HMA's conclusions but draw on different premises - that is not necessarily to quarrel with his premises.
3. From where I sit I see that the chattering classes in the Republic have one great fear. That is that their bluff on Irish unity will be called and that they will be left holding the baby (ie NI) and a baby which is squealing, awkward to hold and unpredictable. Furthermore in their hearts most know that, whatever the external context, any lasting accommodation can only come about when nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland are prepared to compromise. However most people in the Republic of Ireland, as well as (or maybe because of) being fairly ignorant about unionist insecurities, do have the view that unionists are still much less prepared for further compromise than nationalists; that any accommodation is only possible when they are prepared for further compromise; and that any signs which HMG gives them which secures their position does not encourage any movement towards compromise.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

4. They believe that the Anglo Irish Agreement and both Governments' commitment to a three stranded approach are critical in continuing to push the unionists towards compromise. Given the great fear I mentioned earlier any vacuum, from which may or may not emerge a change in HMG policy or direction, therefore heightens their concerns.

(SIGNED)

D G McNEILL
Political Affairs Division
SH Ext 2238

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