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M J WILLIAMS  
US(POL)

Please MUFAX as marked

20 July 1993

cc PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - M  
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - M  
PS/Mr Fell - B  
Mr Thomas - M  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Bell - M  
Mr Wood - B  
Mr Cooke - M  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Brooker - M  
Mrs Collins - B  
Mr Archer, RID - M  
HMA, Dublin - M  
Mr Caine - M

UNDER/ 677/7  
SEC  
20 JUL 1993  
CENT SEC

*Ms M...*

PS/SofS (L&B) - M

**MAASTRICHT, ULSTER UNIONISTS, AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr O'Donovan told me today that Dublin would be watching very closely to see whether any kind of deal was offered to the Ulster Unionist MPs in order to secure their vote in the Maastricht Social Chapter division on Thursday 22 July. Mr Spring had been pressed very closely on reports about a possible deal along these lines, and had refrained from commenting except to say that they would be concerned at any risk that Northern Ireland might become a political football in this matter. However there was some anxiety about whether any kind of deal might be offered which would have the effect of making it impossible to get the political talks going again, eg about some kind of internal settlement or some kind of additional measures on security. There had been reports that we might be thinking about some devolution measures; if these were of the kind which was envisaged within the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Irish would certainly like to know about them, but if they were outside the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Irish would be very concerned about their effect on the entire talks process. Of course, if a deal was being envisaged under which Northern Ireland would get a greater share of the UK's regional funds from the European Community, the Irish would see no difficulties about that.

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2. Having checked with Mr Lindsay before I saw Mr O'Donovan, I responded that it certainly looked as though Thursday's vote was going to be very close, and there was intense speculation about political manoeuvrings leading up to that. The Government's advice was that it could proceed to ratify the Treaty on the basis of the Bill which had already completed its Parliamentary stages, subject only to the new case which had been brought by Lord Rees-Mogg. Therefore Thursday's vote did not seem to have constitutional implications, one way or the other. Nevertheless, the Government would clearly like to win it. In that case, it seemed only reasonable for the Secretary of State to point out to the Ulster Unionists the contrast between the present Government's approach to Northern Ireland and the policy of the Labour Party. It was not clear to me whether the UUP would in fact vote with the Government, the Opposition, or abstain; but in any case, I assured Mr O'Donovan that the Government remained firmly in favour of the Talks process, and would certainly not be contemplating a deal with the Ulster Unionists which would have the effect of wrecking any prospect for the Talks process being resumed.

3. Mr O'Donovan confirmed that this was one of the issues which he would like to discuss with Michael Ancram, over dinner at Maryfield this evening.

[signed]

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