

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Muxated to Mr Burns

FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
18 AUGUST 1989

LMV:

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PS/Secretary of State (L&B) [2&3]
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Mr Stephens - B [6]
Mr Miles - B [7]
Mr Devereil - B [8]
Mr J McConnell - B [9]

MR DANIELL - B [1]

Mr Burns

-[M]

DISCUSSION WITH FATHER ALEC REID

On the evening of 16 August the Secretary of State discussed with officials (PUS, Mr Stephens, Mr Miles, Mr Devereil, Mr McConnell and you) Mr McConnell's minute of 14 August on this subject.

2. The conclusions of the meeting were as follows:

(i) If Father Reid approached Mr McConnell to ask for a further meeting (on a prisons matter or similar subject) Mr McConnell should agree to this.

(ii) At the meeting, Mr McConnell should deliver a carefully prepared message which would deploy established Government positions (eg, on the future of Northern Ireland as laid down in Article 1 of the Agreement) in such a way as to maximise the pressures on Sinn Fein to cease supporting the armed struggle.

(iii) A considered view should be reached on how Mr McConnell should react if Father Reid sought to pass a document to him during the meeting. The feeling of the meeting was that Mr McConnell should probably accept such a

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document, while giving no indication whatever that a reply would be forthcoming.

- (iv) During the meeting Mr McConnell should not make any enquiry about Father Reid's position. If he volunteered information on this point, then the meeting should be terminated.
- (v) In a longer timescale, some preliminary work should be put in hand to assess the implications for Government or possible components in any ceasefire package which might be put forward. Prisons issues might clearly figure largely in any such package.
- (vi) Finally, also in the longer term, the Secretary of State asked that consideration should be given to ways in which pressure on the Republican movement to take a constructive route could be maximised - both through effective security measures which would continue to erode terrorist capabilities, and social and other policies (eg in the prisons) which might contribute to detaching people from the Republican cause.

3. The Secretary of State wishes to see the "steering brief" which is being prepared for Mr McConnell (ie the material envisaged at (ii) and (iii) above) before it is used. (I understand that you are coordinating the preparation of this material.) Although on leave, the Secretary of State will come into NIO(L) next week for this purpose. I should therefore be grateful if the material could reach the Private Office in London by 5.00pm on Wednesday 23 August.

(Signed)

G. J. LEACH
PRIVATE SECRETARY
18 AUGUST 1989