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DMC 30/8

ROM/843/89/SH

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FROM: R O MILES
US(DOI)

22 August 1989

CC PS/PUS (L&B) [2&3]
Mr Stephens - [4]
Mr Devereill [5]
Mr McConnell [6]
Mr BUCAS [M]

MR DANIELL [NO 1]

DISCUSSION WITH FATHER ALEX REID

The PUS has asked me to put a couple of points to you to be added to the brief which you circulated on 22 August.

- (a) It is not just this Government, but any British Government, that will find it impossible to give in to violence. The main argument for this proposition is the record of previous Labour Governments in Northern Ireland. Labour's current strategy document "Towards a United Ireland" says that the Labour Party rejects violence "not simply because the campaign of violence is abhorrent to the party and in direct conflict with the principles of democratic socialism" but because "the paramilitary campaign would lead to yet another partition of Ireland, rather than the ending of partition. At worst it could lead to civil war and sectarian blood letting on a hitherto unprecedented scale". The document rejects the argument for British withdrawal within a specific period, or irrespective of the likely consequences at the time, as being contrary to the principle of consent and as not necessarily leading to a United Ireland. On 14 August Mr Kinnock was reported by the Sun as saying "While the people of Northern Ireland continue to be maimed and murdered, the troops must remain".
- (b) The argument that the British only understand and yield to violence, as demonstrated by their history of de-colonisation, is a profound misunderstanding - as was demonstrated, for example, in the case of the Falklands. De-colonisation has been based on the principle of self-determination, that is to say the principle of consent. PIRA may see themselves in the role of a liberation movement, but this view is accepted by no one else inside or outside Ireland - they are rejected by the electorate here and in the Republic, and have no support in the world community or from other self-styled liberation movements such as the PLO, ANC etc.

2. I should like to make one further point which relates to the last sentence of the brief. While I agree that Father Reid is unlikely to bring the question of his own credentials and status to a head, I hope that Mr McConnell can be given discretion to try to steer him away from this course if he attempts it, rather than to break off the discussion.

[Signed]

R O MILES

Ent 507(III)