

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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PAB/6644/DGMcN/RG

FROM: D G McNEILL, PAB

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cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) [1&2]
PS/Minister of State (B&L) [3&4]
PS/PUS (B&L) [5&6]
Mr Pilling [7]
Mr Ledlie [8]
Mr Alston [9]
Mr Deverell [10]
Mr Thomas [11]
Mr Petch [12]
Mr Marsh [13]
File [14]

Note for the Record

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POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND THE PROVISIONALS

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1. I met Paddy Doherty (Derry Inner City Trust etc) yesterday - the first time I have met him since I have returned to PAB. Doherty and I have a long standing professional relationship and in the past Mitchell McLaughlin (Sinn Fein Chairman and Derry City Councillor) was involved in that relationship.

2. Among the matters we discussed was the Secretary of State's two recent speeches on PIRA and the British Presence. Doherty had discussed these with McLaughlin (and separately with John Hume) and was clearly interested in my perceptions of the speeches. I discussed both speeches with him in terms that they were important, considered and in places - particularly the British Presence speech - used language which had not been used publicly before. Doherty said that McLaughlin's initial reaction was that there was nothing new in them though it was clear that the most recent speech is being further considered by Sinn Fein.

3. He did emphasise that, in his view, PIRA as distinct from Sinn Fein had no real interest in being involved in politics if it were to cease violence but other than repeating the line that the only way violence would cease would be if the British Government were to withdraw from the scene he confessed that he was not close enough to know what the PIRA organisation would settle for eventually.

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4. He pointedly asked me if I wished to talk to Mitchell McLaughlin or if I wished him to talk to McLaughlin. I said no to both suggestions but on the latter said that if Paddy Doherty wants to keep in touch with me he should do so - he would do so anyway.

Comment

5. Paddy Doherty, who so far as I know is not and has not been a member of either PIRA or Sinn Fein, is a man who keeps in close contact with many shades of opinion in Derry. He certainly knows McLaughlin and McGuinness well (but not Adams he says) and keeps them informed of his various enterprise activities in the city, not least to make sure that PIRA do not inhibit him in any way. He is personally close to McLaughlin. He could be a useful contact if one were needed.

(SIGNED)

D G McNEILL
Political Affairs Division
SH Ext 2238

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