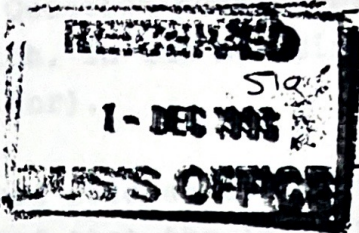


FROM: G MACCABE
 POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
 30 November 1993

COPY NO [] OF 12 COPIES

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L)	- M [2&3]
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L)	- M [4&5]
PS/PUS (L)	M [6]
PS/Mr Fell	[7]
Mr Deverell	[8]
Mr Cooke	M [9]
Mr Rickard	[10]
Mr Beeton	M [11]
Mr May/File	[12]



Mr Thomas - M [1]

CONVERSATION WITH ARCHBISHOP EAMES

On your instructions, I called with Archbishop Eames in Armagh at noon today. I showed him a copy of the British version of the Dublin Joint Statement (25 November Draft). In doing so, I explained that in this form, and although it contained a lot of their language, it was unacceptable to the Irish Government. I added, however, that in the light of further current dialogue in London and Dublin, some modification may still be possible.

2. I said I had been instructed to impress on him how seriously HMG were treating the drafting exercise, and that our profound wish was to reach a satisfactory outcome. It was, however, necessary to temper my remarks with the reality that there were limits beyond which we could not go if there was to be any hope of keeping the majority of Unionists on side. He said he was glad to hear this as community contacts during and since the weekend had shown him once again just how fragile and nervous Unionist opinion was.

3. The Archbishop's first remark after reading the Joint Statement was that it was satisfactory from a Unionist point of view. But, he could see little in it to bring comfort to the Irish Government and, as he put it, "I expect Reynolds will drive this home when we meet in Dublin tomorrow by hitting me over the head with a copy." While he (Eames) was generally satisfied with the

document, and in the present circumstances could not argue that it should be any greener, he said he was afraid that no-one but the most careful reader would see anything new in it. From a Nationalist point of view it must fall far short of the once-and-for-all settlement of the Irish Question Messrs Reynolds, Spring and Hume were looking for (and which, in the Archbishop's opinion, each wanted to claim the credit for).

4. I reminded the Archbishop what I had said at the beginning of our conversation about HMG's commitment and that the Irish had seen a copy of the document and were, to put it mildly, unimpressed. I did not say to whom it had been shown: he suggested Martin Mansergh. As regards tomorrow's meeting with the Taoiseach, he was free to say he had seen the document today, and I suggested it might then be best to wait for Mr Reynolds' response - which might not be as antagonistic as the Archbishop expected if today's further dialogue was fruitful. He said he would do this. He said he would also reflect on the document's contents overnight (I had taken it back but he said he could rely on his memory and some notes he had taken) and would probably conclude it was more novel than he had originally thought. In any case he intended to impress on Mr Reynolds that he thought it was a sincere attempt by HMG to be as constructive as possible.

5. Finally, the Archbishop suggested that the reference to "the Talks process" in the third part of paragraph 4, and elsewhere, could be amplified to make it clear to what we were referring. As drafted, and notwithstanding that it came from the joint statement of 29 October, he thought it could be mistaken for the talks between the two Governments, or worse, Hume/Adams (a strained construction I must say). He also said the "constructive ambiguity" about self-determination at the end of paragraph 2(c) of the constitutional annex was probably the most contentious passage.

Christopher MacCabe

C G MACCABE
SH EXT 27085