

SECRET and PERSONAL

Additional copy: Mr Thomas.

FROM: J McCONNELL
US(PAB)

15/2

13 February 1990

cc PS/PUS (L&B) [3&4]
Mr Burns [5]
Mr Ledlie [6]
Mr Deverell [7]
Mr Daniell [8]

PS/SofS (L&B) [1&2]

DISCUSSION WITH FATHER REID

I had a two hour conversation with Father Reid yesterday. Much of the conversation was a repetition of points he has been making to me over the last period of time but there were some new pieces of information - they are as follows:

- (i) John Hume is still having some form of dialogue with Gerry Adams. I did not probe Father Reid as to the nature of the dialogue ie whether it was face to face or through an intermediary.
- (ii) There are still discussions within Sinn Fein going on about the proposition which Father Reid had given me some details of before Christmas and which were the subject of the letter given to Mr Burns by John Hume.
- (iii) Father Reid told me that during a conversation with Gerry Adams last week Adams had appeared to be somewhat depressed and had said at one point "I feel like jacking the whole the whole lot in". Father Reid did not explain the reason for the depression nor did I probe.
- (iv) I was not asked to do anything though Father Reid continued to say that he felt if Gerry Adams could lift a telephone and talk to people in authority then there might be some chance of breaking the vicious circle which is, as he has stated so often before, they will not talk before renouncing violence and we will not talk unless they do renounce violence.

*a sign of depression
not a forecast*

*There 2
can together
is the talk*

2. He also explained that there is a fundamental difference between John Hume and Gerry Adams not only on violence but on the definition of the problem. John Hume continues to try to convince Adams that the Unionists have to be persuaded to see their future in the

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context of a new Ireland and that the only body which would have any hope persuading them in that direction is HMG. Adams remains convinced that the problem is "the British occupation" and the consequent inability of the Irish people to determine their own future.

3. Father Reid said that he has been away for some weeks and will be bringing himself up to date in the local scene over the next few days. At his request I agreed that he could come back and talk to me in ten days or so.

Comment

4. I think it is worth noting that, if Father Reid's contention at (i) is correct, then Gerry Adams could have a strong card to play if he is minded to stop political progress. This may be a gloomy forecast of how strong a base future interparty talks would have but the reaction of the unionists to the last John Hume/Sinn Fein talks is still strong in the memory. Finally as agreed I maintained a listening role throughout the discussion.


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