

JLH

FROM: I M BURNS, DUS(L)
6 December 1989

Copy No ¹⁰ of 11

cc: PS/PUS (L & B) (3&4) - B
Mr Thomas (5) - B
Mr Miles (6) - B
Mr J McConnell (7) - B
Mr Daniell (8) - B
Mr Kirk (9) - B

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) (1&2) - B

I handed to the Secretary of State last week some papers which John Hume had given me (a letter from the Cardinal, covering a letter from Frs Reid and Murray, which in turn enclosed a "proposal for a democratic overall political and diplomatic strategy for justice, peace and reconciliation"). Mr Hume had handed me these papers at Aldergrove Airport, and there had been no opportunity then either to read them or to discuss them. I saw him again this morning to exchange reactions.

2. Mr Hume said flatly that he was against "all this". He was cross at the use (and the selective use) being made of the papers he had sent to Sinn Fein; he did not like Fr Murray's involvement ("he is a publicist") and reckoned that Fr Reid was so close to the Republicans that he interpreted everything with their point of view in mind. Hume said that he had advised (he did not say who the advice had gone to, but I assume he meant the Cardinal) against publication of the proposal. The proposal would not do any good, and if it were published Hume would speak out against it. [Hume undoubtedly meant that when he said it, but we should not assume too readily that he will criticise the proposal, and implicitly the Cardinal, if it is published.]

3. He asked for my view. I said that the proposal seemed to contain no effective recipe which would induce the Provisionals to give up violence - the mere prospect of a possible conference was scarcely going to bring them closer to abandoning violence than they had already come in their discussions with John Hume. And there was nothing in the proposal that seemed remotely attractive to the unionists, whom the writers seemed to assume should simply be told what to do, in the expectation that they would comply. I did not think the proposal was remotely workable.

4. Summing up the discussion, Hume said that we agreed on this. My impression is that he is genuinely opposed to the proposal, but was anxious to see whether we had seen in it some

more positive angle than he had noticed. I think what I have done therefore is to reinforce his prejudices that the proposal is a bad one.

5. I pointed out to Hume that in his covering letter the Cardinal had not actually commended the proposal himself - he had merely said that Frs Reid and Murray were convinced that the proposal would make a notable contribution. Hume said that the Cardinal had to be careful, since he was here acting behind the backs of his hierarchy. He was in Hume's view, behaving unwisely. This led Hume on to say that he was very cross with O Fiaich for what he had said on Dublin hospital radio about British withdrawal. That was straightforward Provo language, and should not have been used. In an outburst of emotion, Hume said he felt the Cardinal was responsible for the death of the two Catholics murdered in the Ardboe: what the Cardinal, and far too many other people, did not realise was that the average Protestant in Northern Ireland saw the Cardinal as representing all Catholics. Hume's strong implication was that he did not!

SIGNED:

I M BURNS

6 December 1989
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DUSL/KR/13389

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