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SECRET AND PERSONAL

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FROM: D G McNEILL, PAB  
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- PS/PUS (B&L) [3&4]
- Mr Pilling [5]
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**POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND THE PROVISIONALS** 23699A

1. I attach a copy of a press article - copied separately by telecopier - written by Anthony Coughlan, University of Dublin, which he sent to John Hume who gave it to me and asked that I draw it to the attention of the Secretary of State for background briefing.
2. I do not know Anthony Coughlan but John Hume says he is something of a "guru" to Republicans and he was asked by Sinn Fein to analyse the Secretary of State's "British Presence" speech for this. This article emerged from some of those considerations. You will note in his covering letter to John Hume that Coughlan declares that the "British Presence" speech "attracted considerable attention in Republican circles".
3. If the author is close to Sinn Fein thinking the article does show some evidence of developing thought within Republican circles. Firstly it acknowledges that there is a general consensus that there can be no change in the North's constitutional status within the UK except with the consent of the majority there, (I read "there" as Northern Ireland). However it defines this consent in two ways - consent to the principle of unity and consent to the means of unity

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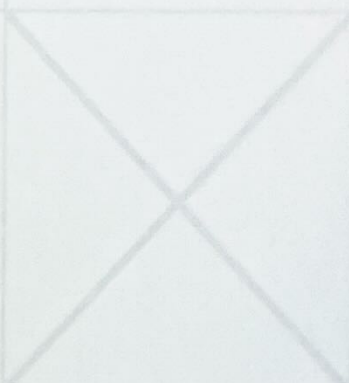


including consent to financial, constitutional and political means in a united Ireland. The article states that Unionists should have no unilateral right to union as a principle and suggests in effect that the Irish Government should say to the British Government - lets both aim for long term unity and work over however long a necessary timespan to secure majority consent in Northern Ireland to unity. In those circumstances the question is posed "would there be any point ..... in the IRA continuing its military campaign".

(SIGNED)

*Doc 20A*

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