

F J.D.

CONFIDENTIAL

PUS/ 769
-9 FEB 1994
N.I.O. LONDON

HCS/193/94

FROM: D FELL
8 FEBRUARY 1994

*Was of opinion or not sent (eg by US) ✓
✓ answer outcome than ✓ N.I.O. LONDON ✓
✓ Mr Mann outcome*

- cc PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- Mr Legge - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Wood (L&B) - B
- Mr Brooker - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Quinn - B
- Mr Beeton - B
- Mr Archer, RID - B
- HMA Dublin - B
- Mr Caine - B

MR THOMAS - B

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: THE INFORMATION EFFORT PRIOR TO THE SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS

1. As PUS will have told you, I am strongly of the view (which I gather you may share) that, on the assumption that the delivery of our 'Notions' paper (still subject to Irish reactions) will be sufficient to keep the UUP and APNI 'on side' for the next three weeks or so, the key objective should be to exercise maximum pressure on Sinn Fein in the run up to the potentially critical Ard Fheis. The very deployment of the Notions paper has raised suspicions in Irish and SDLP minds that we are following a minimalist or 'Molyneauxesque' agenda, and if suspicions are raised in those quarters, we can assume that in Republican circles, our propositions will create new paranoia. I suggest, therefore, that notwithstanding allegations that HMG's approach may resemble that of a pendulum swing, it is nevertheless necessary for us to put on the record, a fairly green-leaning speech or article before the Ard Fheis.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

2. The early deployment of the draft Irish Times article submitted by Jim Daniell on 4 February would be a good start. But I suggest we should find an opportunity to put a further, fairly substantial statement by the Secretary of State on the public record. Inevitably, this would involve some repetition, but it may be essential to ram home some key messages, and the timing of messages may have an important bearing on the Sinn Fein response to the Joint Declaration.
3. Any such statement should, I suggest, pursue three objectives:-
 - (i) to put the maximum pressure on Sinn Fein at the Ard Fheis to accept the Declaration;
 - (ii) (in the event that Sinn Fein are unwilling to accept the Declaration,) to ensure that HMG has done everything possible to avoid any blame attaching to it; and
 - (iii) to reinforce our own view of the complementarity of the peace process and the Talks process.
4. The proposed speech/article might achieve the first and second of its objectives, partly by using fairly green language, partly by demonstrating that the Declaration is genuinely the start of a process, rather than an end in itself, and partly by showing that such a process holds out the prospect of some Nationalist 'gains' which are not threatening to Unionists. (You will recognise the points put to PUS, David Watkins and you last week by Simon Lee and Robin Wilson as the genesis of the last element of this package; these were subsequently trailed further in the Fortnight editorial, and in a more sophisticated way, by

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Simon Lee in his McCallum lecture at Oxford. The fact that Michael Ancram has shown some interest in the ideas floated by Simon Lee in that lecture may prove a useful departure point in selling the sort of speech which I have in mind to Ministers.)

5. I am attaching a first stab at a draft of the kind of statement that I have in mind (largely courtesy of Messrs Quinn and Watkins). It is unashamedly green, but I am conscious of the likelihood that, as it proceeds through the system, balance will be added, and I therefore make no apologies for starting out at the green end of the spectrum. This is where it must be pitched if it is to have maximum effect. I recognise that a lot more work would need to be done on the draft to ensure that it meets all of our objectives.
6. As to the timing of delivery, we would need to take account of other significant events (eg the handing over of the Notions paper to the Northern Ireland parties; the timing of the proposed Irish Times article; the nature of the Secretary of State's speech on 16 February; and Tops on 17 February). If we are seeking to influence Sinn Fein ahead of the Ard Fheis, there is an argument which says that we should give them maximum time to absorb the message. On the other hand, the more time they are given, the more they are likely to absorb that message, and raise the stakes. My own feeling, therefore, is that we should aim for delivery around the start of the week in which the Ard Fheis is to occur. That points to a date of around 20/21 February.
7. With that target date in mind, we might also consider the option of the Prime Minister passing a copy of the speech/article to the Taoiseach when he meets him on 19 February. The imminent prospect of a fairly 'green' statement from HMG might help smooth that occasion,

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DRA

CONFIDENTIAL

particularly if the Irish are uncomfortable with our Notions paper and its deployment.

- 8. I understand that we now have a slot booked on the VCR tomorrow at 4.15 pm to consider whether the approach that I have suggested is worth pursuing; the draft itself; timing; and the best means of deploying the ideas to Ministers.

Signed David Fell

DAVID FELL

I am so glad that this has been so. Because the Joint Declaration addresses issues of the most fundamental importance for people living on the island of Ireland. That is why it is so immensely gratifying that the Joint Declaration has been accepted and in many cases warmly endorsed by political parties which represent the vast majority of people here. In a very real sense, the people of the two parts of the island of Ireland have, through their democratically elected representatives, signalled their agreement on how they should 'exercise their right of self-determination, on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South'. They have determined to embrace the Joint Declaration, and to reject violence as a political weapon.

- 3. Now why are the elected representatives of the people of Ireland, North and South, giving their overwhelming support to the Declaration? I believe that they are doing so because they recognise it as a balanced and fair statement of constitutional principles and political realities. And they see that it acknowledges and

CONFIDENTIAL

DR/45887

CONFIDENTIAL

DR/45887