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cc P.S. 595
PS PWS
18/11 PS Richard Annon

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Copy this please to:

Mr Thomas
Mr Cooke
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From: Mark Elliott
Date: 15 November 1993

[Handwritten signature]
15/11

cc: PS
PS/PUS
~~Mr Archer~~, RIB

Sir T Daunt

NORTHERN IRELAND

1. It might just be worth recording the main points of a conversation that I had with Jim Molyneaux, Leader of the Ulster Unionists, at the reception after the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Cenotaph on 14 November. I had come across Molyneaux on various occasions while I was serving in Belfast between 1985 and 1988.

2. Molyneaux had heard during the last week from a constituent associated with PIRA that there was genuine and widespread feeling now among the Provisionals that they were getting nowhere with their military campaign. Molyneaux had the impression that, whereas in the past there had been a division between the hawks and the doves as regards going down the political track, this had now changed. He said that there was a rather similar feeling among the "so-called loyalists" - ie the UDA, UVF, etc. Something of a balance of terror had been reached. The time had come to try to break out of the circle of violence.

3. Molyneaux said that he had good contacts with the Irish Government. The Tanaiste (Dick Spring) had had some useful ideas and could have achieved something but Reynolds was holding him back and imposing a bureaucratic straitjacket. Molyneaux said that he had sent a message to Reynolds but had had no reply. The implication was that Molyneaux thought there was a way forward but Reynolds was not playing.

4. From another reference it emerged that Molyneaux thought very little of the Hume/Adams plan (unsurprisingly).

5. Molyneaux said at the end, clearly expecting that I was in a position to do something about it, that he would be very willing to do anything which HMG would like him to "in a Privy Counsellor capacity", presumably by way of passing messages or making representations to the Irish.

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6. I am not sure whether this is at all new to you. Nor have I had enough dealings with Molyneux recently to know whether this relative optimism, which he was certainly not showing in the eighties, means anything. Over to you.

Mark Elliott

Mark Elliott

The Prime Minister was very grateful for the time which he gave me last on Friday evening. I gave him a full report as soon as I returned on Saturday. Now is not the place for me to go further into what I have to say but we shall obviously continue to work as rapidly as possible in moving through the proposals which I described. One additional element is that I understand that Archbishop James may be seeking to have a further discussion with the Taoiseach before he comes to see the Prime Minister.

May I add to the Prime Minister's appreciation my own thanks to you and Sean for your time and your hospitality, including a dinner the excellence of which I did not fail to notice despite the invigorating conversation accompanying it.

Later this evening, the Prime Minister will be delivering a warning statement on Northern Ireland as a substantial part of his speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet. I enclose the relevant part of his address that you may wish to pass a copy to the Taoiseach. The Prime Minister drafted this passage in the light of my report, and specifically of some of the views you expressed. As you will see, he addresses in the most explicit form the importance of the opportunity for peace, and the fact that we are "actively seeking a framework to deliver peace, stability and reconciliation".

Please keep in touch as things develop in the run up to the bilateral summit and beyond. The Prime Minister is in no doubt of the importance of our Governments continuing to work together, which, as you know, he asked me to emphasise on Friday. If there are developments which cause concern or