

FROM: PUS
17 JANUARY 1991

Copy no of [4]

cc. Mr Pilling [2]
Mr Deverell [3]

SECRETARY OF STATE [1]

PROVISIONALS: THE CONTACT ISSUE

Following our discussion yesterday afternoon, I attach, in case of need:

- (i) an unclassified list of possible questions and answers for use at Question Time; and
- (ii) a note, also classified Secret and Personal, for use if Mr John Hume asks for your reaction to what he said to Mr McNeill and me on Friday last (11 January).

2. I cannot pretend that this advice is entirely satisfactory, but it rests on the assumption that anything said in Parliament or in public should be framed so as to preserve maximum freedom of manoeuvre to the extent that is consistent with previous statements of Government policy (including your 'British Presence' speech, and what the Prime Minister said to Mr Trimble in the House of Commons on Tuesday 15 January - extracts are attached) and the need to reassure and sustain trust on the Unionist side. I also assume a blocking or evasive line would simply create suspicion.

3. While a supplementary on this point could come up on almost any Question, the likeliest are nos 1 (Mr Andrew Mitchell), 5 (Mr Ron Brown) and perhaps 12 (Mr Andrew Hunter). No. 20 (Mr Michael Latham) is most unlikely to be reached, I imagine. You may want to consider whether the Minister of State and Mr Hanley should have a copy of the note (though they would be able to say the point does not arise on any of their questions).

Signed:

J A CHILCOT

17 JANUARY 1991