

Jkl

SECRET

FROM: I M BURNS, DUS(L)
1 May 1990

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DUS OFFICE

cc: Mr Daniell - B
Mr Marsh - B

MR ALSTON - B

THE REID/MURRAY LETTER

When I saw John Hume on Monday 30 April, I asked him whether there had been any further developments on the Reid/Murray letter that he had given me before Christmas. He told me that Sinn Fein were not attracted to the proposition in the letter, and that they had replied accordingly to Reid. Hume confirmed, as he had already told me earlier in the year, that he himself was not attracted to the proposition.

Side, it assumes that the battle can be won by persuading the unionists that they are not really unionists at all.

2. I understand Mr Hume's opposition. For good reasons of personal and political amour propre, he wants to stay in control of the epic struggle for the soul of nationalism, in which he represents the forces of good. The role of the Church and Dublin is to be played from outside the ring, not to confuse matters by stepping out in front of him.

SIGNED:

I M BURNS

1 May 1990
OAB 6447
DUSL/KR/16116

3. I am not so sure that we can go all the way with Mr Hume. If I remember rightly, Father Reid told Mr McConnell that he thought the initiative would not appeal to unionists, and that the object was to give the supporters of the Provisional Government an alternative to think about other than violence. In other words, the objectives are very like the objectives with which Mr Hume was concerned on his talks with Sinn Fein last year. Mr Hume's initiative was high risk for the RUC, but was I believe justified by the outcome. The Reid/Murray initiative seems to me to carry less risk, and to have the same purpose.

4. While we cannot endorse, still less become involved in it, we therefore do not see that it is in our interest that it should be stalled.

5. It is interesting that Mr Hume believes that, insofar as Cardinal O Fiach is involved, he is acting behind the back of his hierarchy. Like you, I was very guarded about the extent to which the Cardinal has lent his name to this enterprise.