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COVERING SECRET AND PERSONAL

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FROM: D G McNEILL, PAB
DATE: 4 FEBRUARY 1991

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N.I.O. LONDON

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cc PS/PUS (B&L) [364]
Mr Deverell [16]
Mr Ledlie [7]
Mr Alston [3]

File [9]

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) [182]

Mr J Pilling

I attach a draft submission to PS/Secretary of State on the request from the two Archbishops to meet the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister. I would be grateful for any views you have on this. As you can see I have not prepared any submissions for No.10 until the line proposed or otherwise has been agreed by the Secretary of State. You may wish to discuss in which case I can arrange for a discussion to be set up. The Private Office deadline for advice to the Secretary of State is 6 February.

3. As you know there has been regular contact between the two chaplains and me over the last few months and the Secretary of State and I have had conversations with both Archbishops on these issues.

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Political Affairs Division
SH Ext 2238

These churches has been largely in a state of... with us stating and clarifying the position that we cannot negotiate with a non-armed violent organisation such as PIRA and that we can only deal with Sinn Fein when violence ends - the latter concept not being defined in concrete terms. However the two clergymen believe and their Bishops seem to support them that the PAC would be prepared to order a cessation of violence if we were to meet them even if that contact was not long lasting and even if subsequent substantive dialogue continued only with Sinn Fein.

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