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Information Note for the Minister

Recent developments in the Annie Maguire, Birmingham Six and Guildford Four cases.

1. Since the Minister last spoke on these cases (23 October 1986) there have been some developments, although the position of the cases at the Home Office does not appear to have materially changed. In recent weeks, Senator Flor O'Mahoney has suggested a further all party delegation to meet leaders of opposition parties in Britain.
2. The Annie Maguire and Guildford Four cases were debated in the House of Lords on 4 November 1986. No concessions were made from the established position. The Birmingham Six case was the subject of an oral question from Ms Clare Short, M.P., in the House of Commons; again there was no move from the settled position, but it became clear from the Home Secretary's responses that a protracted correspondence has been going on between Chris Mullin and the Home Office. No hint was given as to how much longer the review of this case would take.
3. Outside of parliament, there has been a considerable public interest in all three cases. RTE's Today Tonight presented a review of the cases and the Channel four panel discussion on Sunday, November 16, while bringing in no new evidence, allowed a number of public figures to air views on the case. The following morning, an open meeting organised by Clive Soley, M.P. and the Federation of Irish Societies took place in the House of Commons. Lord Fitt, Robert Kee, Clive Soley and Alistair Logan addressed meeting. There was no clear agreement on exactly which course to follow, though a clear consensus emerged that the cases should

continue to be presented as a crisis for British justice and not an Anglo-Irish problem. There has been a considerable volume of correspondence in the wake of this publicity for the cases.

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24 November 1986

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