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Mr. Westlake
Mr. James A.
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Meeting with Eddie McGrady

27 January 1988

He remains privately unconvinced that John Hume did the right thing in meeting Gerry Adams. He was personally embarrassed by the meeting because he, as SDLP Chief Whip, had issued a directive to SDLP councillors to refrain from aiding or associating with Sinn Fein in the wake of the Enniskillen bombing. In his opinion, there is no possibility of the PIRA refraining from violence in the foreseeable future. Sinn Fein had, therefore, much more to gain from the meeting than the SDLP. He is even more concerned about the possibility of a further meeting with Sinn Fein. Should it materialise, it would be far more formal and involve other SDLP members.

He said that the SDLP reaction to the the British Attorney General's decision on the Stalker/Sampson RUC affair reflected the attitude of the nationalists in the North both in public statements and private expectations. Publicly, the indignation was widespread and heartfelt while privately there had always been the expectation that members of the RUC would be not be charged with anything other than misdemeanours. In one sense, the announcement has helped vindicate their refusal to give unqualified support to the RUC. He was very pleased with the strong line being taken by the Irish Government.

The SDLP, he advised, were now concerned that the Northern Ireland Office appeared to be watering down the proposed legislation on fair employment. We spoke of the SDLP delegation's meeting the previous Saturday with officials here on the matter and I outlined some of the points discussed. I also told him that we were currently talking to the Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development about it and significant differences were evident. He pointed out that he and many others in the party had not yet had time to assess the significance of the details of the points at issue in the British proposals, the SACHR report and other papers. He was particularly interested in the issue because he would be the party spokesperson on fair employment at Westminster. I suggested an in-depth briefing from the Department and he said he would welcome one.

On the general issue of fair employment he said that discrimination was not confined to employers in the private sector. He was currently looking into a case where it is alleged that a local businessman was told that he would be given a LEDU grant provided he moved to Carrickfergus, i.e. from a nationalist to a loyalist area. [

(As I reported in my note of a meeting with Alasdair McDonnell of 23 September, 1987, Aer Lingus deals with this company through Shorts.) He has already raised the issue with the NIO. Though he has not as yet had a response, he will persist until the matter is satisfactorily resolved.

He spoke about the "seige of Downpatrick" on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of the previous week, when the UDR, the RAF, the Army and RUC put up road blocks on all roads leading to the town (21 in all) for a continuous period of approximately 60 hours. The UDR, RAF and Army patrols were unaccompanied, and the RUC would not say why the operation took place. He received many complaints from the town's business people. The inconvenience and the general air of harassment was compounded for them by a considerable loss of business.

These and other large-scale security activities which have been going on throughout Northern Ireland during the past week, together with Secretary of State King's warning about a Libyan-backed threat, has prompted many in the SDLP to speculate about the possibility of the British Government introducing internment. He advised that the SDLP would be very much against internment; it would do them great political damage and become a major recruiting agent for the PIRA.

L
Liam Canniffe
29 January 1988

cc: Mr. Gallagher
Counsellors A-I
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Note

I drew x to attention of
Secretariat (Mr. Jaffey) as additional
information on this matter. (my
CS6 A 21 Jan on this file refers)

Liam

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