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A-1 Section file
Peter Robinson file
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END MESSAGE
CONFIDENTIAL
DATE: 20/6/85
INITIALS: <i>ES</i>

MMYYYYY FROM WASHINGTON
FOR B DAVENPORT FROM M BURKE

PETER ROBINSON'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

S 19030

ROBINSON IS HERE ON A MONTH-LONG USIA-SPONSORED VISITOR'S PROGRAMME. THE BRITISH EMBASSY HAS NOT MADE ANY REAL EFFORT TO ARRANGE MEETINGS FOR HIM ON CAPITOL HILL. HE HAS HAD CONTACT ONLY WITH WERNER BRANDT IN TOM FORLEY'S OFFICE.

ROBINSON, IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH BRANDT, STRESSED THE INABILITY OF ANY UNIONIST POLITICIAN TO WORK ALONGSIDE SINN FEIN AND FELT THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN N.I. COULD NOT FUNCTION IN THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES. HE ALLEGED THAT THERE WAS A GROWING COOPERATION BETWEEN SINN FEIN (PSF) AND THE SDLP WHICH HE FELT WOULD LEAD IN DUE COURSE TO PSF AND THE SDLP DOING A DEAL OVER WESTMINSTER SEATS AT THE NEXT ELECTION. THIS WOULD RESULT IN THE UNIONIST PARTIES LOSING AT LEAST TWO OR MORE SEATS. IN HIS VIEW ANY ELECTED BODY AT LOCAL OR ASSEMBLY LEVEL WOULD BECOME UNWORKABLE ONCE PSF TOOK THEIR SEATS AND THE LOGIC OF HIS COMMENTS POINTED RELUCTANTLY IN THE DIRECTION OF CONTINUED DIRECT RULE IF NOT GREATER INTEGRATION. THE SOLUTION IN ROBINSON'S VIEW WOULD HAVE BEEN P TO N PROSCRIBE SINN FEIN AT AN EARLY DATE. BRANDT POINTED OUT HOW DISASTROUS SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD BE IN INCREASING SUPPORT FOR SINN FEIN, DAMAGING CONSTITUTIONAL NATIONALISM AND THE FACT THAT IT WOULD ALSO HAVE AN EXTREMELY DAMAGING EFFECT ON U.S. OPINION. A POLITICAL SOLUTION WHICH DEALT WITH ALIENATION WAS NECESSARY IF PROGRESS IS TO BE MADE. ROBINSON WAS PREDICTABLY DISMISSIVE OF THESE ARGUMENTS.

19030

ROBINSON, IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE WISHFUL THINKING, EXPRESSED DOUBTS AS TO HOW LONG SINN FEIN WOULD PURSUE THE "POLITICAL PHASE"

AND SAID THAT ALTHOUGH ADAMS APPEARED TO BE RIDING HIGH AT PRESENT, THERE WERE UNDERLYING TENSIONS IN THE PIRA WHICH COULD LEAD EVENTUALLY TO HIS POLITICAL STRATEGY FAILING.

HE ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES AND DISINVESTMENT AND WONDERED WHETHER HE SHOULD TRY AND PUBLICISE HIS OPPOSITION TO THE CAMPAIGN HERE. BRANDT STRONGLY ADVISED HIM NOT TO DO SO POINTING OUT THE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE NATURE OF SUCH COMMENTS FROM THE DUP ON IRISH-AMERICAN OPINION.

20/04/85

IN GENERAL, BRANDT FOUND ROBINSON IN A LOW-KEY MOOD AND SOMEWHAT DEPRESSED ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION IN N.I. SURPRISINGLY, ROBINSON DID NOT RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE ANGLO-IRISH DISCUSSIONS.

END OF MESSAGE

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