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STEERING NOTE

POLITICAL

Sinn Fein and the SDLP have released a further selection of the documents exchanged in the course of their talks (see note on brief). It is evident from these that, besides the SDLP's effort to persuade Sinn Fein that the PIRA's campaign of violence should end, the two sides differ on two crucial issues - whether Britain is now, as the SDLP holds, "neutral" on the issue of Northern Ireland's political status and whether Unionist consent to a united Ireland should first be secured.

DUP deputy leader, Mr. Peter Robinson, said on 12 September that he understood that Secretary of State King had indicated to the Unionist leaders that the suspension of the Anglo-Irish Agreement is not an "insurmountable obstacle" in getting "proper negotiations going on between constitutional parties in Northern Ireland".

LEGAL AND SECURITY ISSUES

Gibraltar inquest

Most of this week's hearing was given over to the evidence of the SAS soldiers whose testimony took the line that their intention was to arrest the three, that this intention was foiled when one of the three recognised them, that the three made threatening movements which the SAS thought was to detonate a bomb, and that either a warning was attempted or that the warning and the first shot "blended". The SAS evidence concentrated on their belief that there was a bomb which could be remotely triggered (and not that the three may have been armed). One of the soldiers said that they had to be sure that the three would be incapable of movement as they knew from the Dessie O'Hare case that a wounded man can still function. One soldier admitted that the warning he heard his colleague utter would have been "useless". Only one soldier was reported to have said that the operation was

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prematurely triggered by a police siren. They denied shooting bodies on the ground.

In separate developments, Sunday Times journalists have been summoned before the Gibraltar Supreme Court on the grounds of alleged contempt arising out of articles on 11 September. There were also reports from Madrid that the Spanish police did have a surveillance operation (this was denied in the SAS evidence) and had offered to arrest the three. However, they may not press the point publicly at the moment in view of Mrs Thatcher's imminent visit to Spain for discussions on, inter alia, Gibraltar.

Security situation

This month continues to be quiet with only one death in the past week (two deaths for this month so far). However, the RUC warned that the North could expect a wave of violence between now and the end of the year.

The RUC uncovered arms for use by loyalists last weekend and there was a large IRA arms find in Derry on 13 September. In County Louth the following day a bunker was discovered containing packets of explosives used for boosting rockets. A quantity of weapons was found in a mine shaft at Rossmore, near Carlow. The Gardai believe that the mine shaft was also used as a testing area for weapons.

The British confirmed today that the Royal Irish Rangers will be deployed in South-East Fermanagh from 21 September. We objected to this plan when it was reported in the media some time ago.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES

John Hume renewed his party's call on 13 September for the decentralisation of civil service jobs. This followed a complaint by DUP MP Peter Robinson that 1,000 government jobs were to be moved from the Belfast area to Derry. Civil service

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spokesmen commented only that the transfer of jobs to Derry was under consideration but that no decision had been taken.

Fr. Des Wilson and Oliver Kearney published a document on 8 September entitled "West Belfast - The Way Forward" in which it is claimed that the Catholic Church is taking control of the new package to revitalise disadvantaged areas of Belfast. Church leaders are accused of becoming political and economic agents of the government.

SDLP Councillor Brian Feeney claimed on 12 September that the IRA's principal motive for bombing the home of Sir Kenneth Bloomfield was the latter's leading role in drawing up the plans for the revitalisation of West Belfast.

IRISH PRISONERS IN BRITAIN

The Tánaiste met the British Home Secretary in London on 14 September to discuss the Guildford Four and related cases - a report is on the brief. The Oireachtas Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Prisoners in Britain met in Leinster House on 15 September.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE U. S.

The Bush/Quayle campaign has issued a policy statement on Northern Ireland (text is on the brief).

The Governor of Illinois has signed the State's MacBride Principles Bill into law (Illinois is the ninth State to incorporate the Principles into State law).

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STEERING NOTE

POLITICAL

In his key-note speech at the DUP party conference, Rev. Ian Paisley called for the setting up of a new assembly in Northern Ireland whose task would be to report on structures for the government of the North. Its conclusions would then be submitted to a referendum. He made clear that this initiative could only take place once the Anglo-Irish Agreement had been suspended. He also supported a motion, subsequently approved by delegates, which directed the party executive to inquire into "constitutional alternatives".

Paisley had billed his address as one of the most important political speeches of his career. In the event, it failed to live up to expectations; it has been suggested that he responded to appeals from the OUP leader, Mr. James Molyneaux, to moderate it particularly in his references to an independent Ulster.

In the course of the conference, DUP deputy leader Mr. Peter Robinson rejected the notion, being floated by the Alliance party in particular, that unionists participate in the review of the workings of the Intergovernmental Conference. That would merely involve, he said, reviewing that which unionists sought to abolish.

LEGAL AND SECURITY ISSUES

Gibraltar inquest

The Gibraltar police and independent eye-witnesses gave evidence during the past week ^{ending 23 Sept}. The testimony of the police differed in some respects from that given by the SAS and the evidence of the eye-witnesses contradicted some of the evidence of the SAS. However, some of these witnesses also differed among themselves

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as to what had happened. A note of a report from Mr McDonagh is on the brief.

Inquests in Northern Ireland

The Belfast Coroner has announced that he will hold an inquest into the deaths of Gervais McKerr, Sean Burns and Eugene Toman who were killed on 11 November 1982 in the course of an RUC operation which was subsequently investigated by Stalker. There is no indication of when the inquests into the other three shot in the course of this operation (Carroll, Grew and Tighe) will take place.

Legal appointments

Mr Anthony Campbell QC was appointed a judge of the High Court to fill the vacancy of Mr Justice Hutton who had been elevated to the position of Lord Chief Justice consequent on Lord Lowry becoming a Law Lord. Previously he had been the senior Crown Counsel acting for the Attorney General and had represented the Attorney General in human rights cases in Strasbourg. Mr Brian Kerr, a young Catholic QC, was appointed to replace Mr Campbell as senior Crown Counsel.

Seizure of funds for terrorism

The British Home Secretary announced that legislation will be introduced in the context of the new PTA legislation to enable the seizure of funds believed to be for the purpose of financing terrorism. The onus will be on the holder of the funds to show that this is not the case - a provision similar to that under the Offences against the State (Amendment) Act 1985. Seamus Mallon expressed concern about the reversal of the onus of proof.

Security situation

The IRA campaign against the commercial centre of Belfast continued with two bomb attacks during the week, one on a prestige development still under construction. Sectarian attacks also continued with an attempted assassination on a nationalist

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in North Belfast last Tuesday, followed by the assassination this morning of a nationalist in West Belfast.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Unemployment figures in Northern Ireland dropped slightly in August to 117,501 or 16.9% of the workforce. Strabane remains the worst unemployment blackspot with 30.8% out of work.

A British Government survey just published has highlighted the low standard of living in Northern Ireland. Household incomes in Northern Ireland are about 20% lower than those in the UK as a whole and a much higher degree of household income in Northern Ireland is provided by social security benefits.

BRITISH LABOUR PARTY POLICY PAPER

The Government welcomed publication of the British Labour Party document "Towards a United Ireland" as a timely and constructive contribution to the search for a peaceful solution in Northern Ireland and an end to violence. SDLP leader, Mr. John Hume also welcomed the paper: "This is the first time any British Labour party has set out in detail its strategy for dealing with the problems of Ireland and the process by which it hopes to achieve its objectives". The OUP dismissed it as a "fantasy-land blue print drawn up by blinkered politicians". The DUP's Peter Robinson said it was a "more polished version" of Sinn Fein policy and argued that unionists would never agree to the Labour party's "drip-feed" version of a united Ireland.

MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES

The Michigan House of Representatives yesterday passed a Bill based on the MacBride Principles. Michigan is the headquarters of the Ford Motor Company which has a major plant in Northern Ireland.

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