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| 1. Mr Bell (*see below) | c.c. PS/Lord Lyell (L) | - B |
| 2. PS/Lord Lyell (B) - B | ① PS/Sir K Bloomfield | - B |
| (via Typing Pool in NIO | PS/PUS (L&B) | - B |
| Dundonald House) | Mr Burns | - B |
| | Mr Chesterton | - B |
| | Mr Miles | - B |
| | Mr A Wilson | - B |
| | Mr Kirk | - B |
| | Mr Wood (L&B) | - B |
| | Mr George, RID, FCO | |
| | Mr M Llewellyn Smith, PARIS | |
| | ② filing POL 1 | |

COLLOQUIUM ON NORTHERN IRELAND

On the recommendation of the Paris Embassy, supported by SIL, Lord Lyell has agreed to speak at a colloquium on Northern Ireland which is being held in Paris on Friday 18 November under the auspices of the Centre de Recherche d'Etudes en Civilisation Britannique (CRECIB). (Mr Bone's submission of 24 October and Mr Pedlow's note of 31 October (not to all) refer.) Northern Ireland is the set subject for this year's examinations for prospective secondary school and university teachers of English in France. The audience for the colloquium will be about 50 of the university lecturers responsible for teaching this course (and others) to the aspiring English teachers. This is therefore an important opportunity to put over HMG's position to an intelligent and influential audience, who will in turn influence a large number of young French people.

2. The programme for the colloquium has Lord Lyell leading off with a speech on Northern Ireland which will be followed by a question and answer session. The Minister will then be followed by the Irish representative (whom we understand will be the Irish Ambassador in Paris) who will similarly speak and answer questions. All the proceedings will be in English; they are scheduled to last in total some 3 hours.

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3. The Embassy have suggested that the opening speech might last for 45 minutes or so. When I discussed this with the Minister yesterday, he suggested that we should aim for a draft of some 30-35 minutes, so that with some additions which the Minister intends to make himself (for example, a passage on agriculture which is being commissioned separately from DANI) the speech will come up to the required length. (It also occurs to me that the Minister may wish to speak fairly deliberately, given that his audience will be listening to a discourse in a foreign language on a subject which at this stage they may not know well.)

4. I accordingly attach for the Minister's consideration a draft which I trust broadly meets the requirements. (On a point of detail, I have tracked down the de Beaumont quote which I mentioned to the Minister on Monday: it is placed (minus accents) in paragraph 1 of the draft.) We shall be submitting separately tomorrow a full package of briefing for the visit (during which I shall be accompanying the Minister along with Mr Pedlow).

(signed)

S J LEACH
SIL DIVISION
15 November 1988

(*) D'accord PUB 15.11.88

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SPEECH BY LORD LYELL

1. As a Minister in the Northern Ireland Office, I was pleased to learn that those who are destined to teach English at an advanced level in the schools and universities of France will be studying Northern Ireland as a special subject. I am therefore particularly grateful for the kind invitation extended by the Centre de Recherche et d'Etudes en Civilisation Britannique to speak to you, who will be teaching this course, about the British Government's policies in this part of the United Kingdom. It was a French writer of the last century, Gustave de Beaumont, the great friend and colleague of de Tocqueville, who made the perceptive observation that

"L'Irlande est une petite contree sur laquelle se debattent les plus grandes questions de la politique, de la morale et de l'humanite."

I am sure that in your own research and teaching you will, like de Beaumont, find much that provokes reflection on serious and fundamental questions - on for example, the responses which a democratic society must make to the challenge of terrorism. While I do not intend to venture far today into the more controversial byways of Irish history, I hope that what I have to say will at least illuminate for you the realities of Northern Ireland and the prospects for progress which exist.

2. If I may make one preliminary comment, I hope that as many as possible of you and your students will visit the North to see for yourselves what it is like. One of the pernicious side-effects of

terrorism is that as well as the dreadful crimes that are actually committed, a phantom miasma of violence all too often dominates the impressions of Northern Ireland conveyed by the news media, greatly distorting the picture that people elsewhere in Europe have of it. In reality, the North is a society which is in many respects attractive, warm and vibrant. By far the great majority of the population live completely normal lives, untouched by terrorism. There aren't soldiers on every street corner, or bombed-out buildings in every shopping centre. Belfast has undergone a quite remarkable renaissance and is now, once again, a thriving commercial centre. And in the last year there have been very significant economic achievements: £300m of new investment and a 10,000 fall in unemployment.

3. But there is also of course a more difficult reality in Northern Ireland: the reality of a society with a profound division which affects many aspects of its life. The majority of the population are Unionist and generally Protestant in religion. By Unionist I mean that they wish to preserve the union with Great Britain and that they see themselves as British - not exclusively British, but British as much as Irish, although the modern secular Britain within which they wish to remain is no longer the strongly Protestant imperial power of the nineteenth century. The minority are nationalist and Catholic and aspire to a united Ireland in some form. They tend to see themselves as Irish alone, and draw an important part of their identity from their Gaelic past. In a real

sense, this division between the two parts of the community in the North is just as real a border as the geographical one which divides Northern Ireland from the Republic.

4. The two sides of the community tend to play different sports and attend different schools. But this is not apartheid. No Government has forced these divisions on the people: in areas such as education and identity individual choice is the determining factor. (But at the same time, it is entirely proper that Government should encourage those parents who want their children to be educated alongside pupils from the other side of the community, and we have recently announced proposals to promote such integrated education.) Nor is the division between people unbridgeable. There are mixed marriages between Catholic and Protestants. In many parts of Northern Ireland Catholic and Protestant live close to one another; they share work places and leisure pursuits. Many people feel it is their Christian or moral duty to maintain better relations with members of the other side of the community; and many people think little of the decision and simply have friends wherever they choose.

5. The social and political realities of the North are not ordained by Government: they are the legacy of history and the outcome of many interlinked causes. It is not my purpose to expatiate on those causes, but since the topic you will be teaching is Northern Ireland from 1968 to 1988, I would like to contrast in one or two respects those two dates. In 1968 the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was active in organising marches and

demonstrations against the then Northern Ireland Government. While this campaign was modelled to some extent on similar events at that period in France and elsewhere, it also articulated an undoubted sense of injustice in the minority community flowing from the discrimination which had been practised against them in the areas of housing, elections and employment.

6. The eradication of that discrimination has been a central element in the British Government's efforts to restore stability to the Province and reduce its sectarian divisions. An independent Housing Executive was created in the early 1970s and it is fair to say that this has now restored complete confidence in the impartial allocation of housing in Northern Ireland. Bishop Cahal Daly, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, commented only last month that

"Under the aegis of the Housing Executive, Northern Ireland can offer to the world a model of political impartiality in respect of allocation of housing, as well as a model of quality and standards in publicly-owned housing"

Electoral abuses such as gerrymandering and an incomplete franchise based on property ownership have effectively been outlawed. In respect of employment in the public sector, it is now the case that some 36.7 per cent of members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service whose religion is known are Roman Catholic, compared with 30.7 per cent in 1980. This increased representation has taken place throughout the Service, particularly at middle management level. In the Housing Executive, which manages all public housing in the North, some 37 per cent of all employees are now Roman Catholic

(very close to the level of Roman Catholics in the population as a whole). In 1973, by contrast, less than 25 per cent of the workforce was Catholic.

7. Extensive measures taken by the Government since 1972 - especially the prohibition of religious discrimination in employment and the creation of an independent Fair Employment Agency, with wide-ranging powers - have contributed to the progress which has been made in ensuring equality of opportunity in the public sector. But there has been less progress in employment in the private sector. Because of that, we have decided to take further and radical new steps, including for example the creation of a new and more powerful Fair Employment Commission to replace the existing Agency, coupled with the placing of a duty on all but the smallest employers to monitor the religious composition of their workforce, all backed up by a framework of legally enforceable directions and sanctions. Legislation to give effect to these new measures will be introduced into Parliament very shortly.

8. The position in 1988, therefore, is that all the stated objectives of the civil rights movement have long ago been met, and the British Government continues to take vigorous and effective action to ensure equality under the law for all the citizens of Northern Ireland. The vicious campaign of terrorist violence conducted by, in particular, the Provisional IRA can therefore find absolutely no justification in the objective realities of Northern Ireland society. In fact the terrorist campaign attacks the most basic civil right of all, the right to life.

9. Terrorism exploits and exacerbates the division which exists in Northern Ireland. The IRA campaign is based not - as they ludicrously claim - on a desire for self determination, but on crushing the democratic process, and smashing anybody who does not agree with them. The IRA want to make people think that anything would be better than continued killing. And the IRA's "anything" is a United Ireland dominated by the IRA. Everybody in the island of Ireland knows what sort of regime that would be. It will not happen. The Government of the United Kingdom, the people of the United Kingdom, most of all amongst them, the people of Northern Ireland, will not allow it to happen, nor will the Republic be prepared to see their institutions taken over at the point of a gun.

10. The Government's security policy is straightforward. Terrorism will be opposed and resisted at every opportunity. Renewed terrorism will simply increase that resolve. But at the same time our weapons and our methods cannot and must not be those of the terrorists themselves. To stoop to the level of the terrorist would be wrong in itself. And it would not work. We must continue to deal with terrorist acts as the criminal activities they are.

11. The framework within which the police and the rest of the security forces work is one governed by the rule of law. Essentially this framework is the same as it is in the rest of the United Kingdom. Terrorists are not tried for their opinions, nor are they convicted on suspicion. Our system of law and order has to take account of the reality of terror and the intimidation which it

brings, and we give continuing attention to its effectiveness. But the system itself remains the one on which our democratic society insists.

12. Firm measures to combat the men of violence are essential to the future of Northern Ireland. But we must also, of course, do everything we can to support those who are trying in a practical way to unite rather than divide. We have therefore initiated a positive and comprehensive community relations policy. This involves working to expand cross-community contact at all levels, but particularly amongst young people. We are seeking to increase mutual understanding and respect, for example by looking for ways in which the school curriculum, the arts and museums can illuminate cultural diversity in a way which is constructive rather than threatening. And finally we are considering how we might increase our support for the efforts of all those who have bravely and quietly been working for many years to preserve and improve community relations in Northern Ireland. No one should under-estimate the contribution which these unsung heroes and heroines have made.

13. But if sustained progress is to be made in healing the divisions of the North, it must come not only at the grassroots but also at the political level. The constitutional political leaders of the two parts of the community must talk to each other and find ways of addressing their shared problems. While the present system of direct rule is a necessary expedient and has served the North well, the Government believes that it is not through direct rule that we can achieve our ultimate objectives of peace, reconciliation

and stability. To reach those goals we must develop structures which directly harness the energy, courage and resourcefulness of the Northern Ireland people from both parts of the community, to govern themselves and ultimately to bring about a peaceful society characterised by tolerance and pluralism. To those people of good will in Northern Ireland who feel that the present arrangements do not give them a fair deal I would commend the words of John Morley, Mr Gladstone's Chief Secretary for Ireland, who said that

"the best guarantee of justice in public dealings is the participation in their own government of the people who most fear that they may suffer from injustice".

14. The Government's policy is squarely aimed at promoting peace and stability in Northern Ireland, creating a new climate of friendship and mutual purpose between the two major traditions, and improving cooperation in combatting terrorism. We must bring about conditions in which the decent law-abiding citizens of Northern Ireland can make progress together. That is why three years ago the British and Irish Governments signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Agreement represents the clearest possible statement that constitutional and democratic methods are the only acceptable way to help a society evolve and develop: not violence, not bombs and bullets.

15. Of course, the Agreement does not offer a guarantee that the UK and Irish Governments will always agree about everything and indeed its very structure recognises that there will be disagreements. We will continue to have our differences. But this is inevitable:

complete accord is only reached on issues devoid of substance, whereas it is the tough and complex problems which most need to be discussed. The Agreement creates a framework within which such problems can be rapidly and positively addressed, in mutual respect and with no derogation of sovereignty by either side. Whatever the temporary difficulties, the over-riding fact is that both Governments remain firmly committed to the Agreement, and to the need to cooperate in making progress on the security and social problems of the North. As provided for in the Agreement, the two Governments are currently reviewing the workings of the Intergovernmental Conference (the principal forum for meetings between British and Irish Ministers). Our mutual concern in this exercise is to enhance the effectiveness of the Conference and the positive contribution it can make to Northern Ireland's future.

16. Can that positive future be achieved? There are signs that conditions do now exist in which real progress might be made towards new political arrangements in which power could be devolved back to Northern Ireland's own constitutional political leaders from both sides of the community. Of course, some members of the constitutional nationalist tradition see progress towards a broadly supported devolved system as in some way compromising or setting back their long-term aspiration to a united Ireland. I believe that this apprehension is mistaken, and damagingly so. The reality is that in Article 1 of the Agreement the two sovereign Governments have jointly affirmed that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people there. That is in part a moral statement - a statement that

it is as valid an aspiration to want to remain British as well as Irish, as it is to want to be exclusively Irish. But it is also a recognition of the real world: in practical terms there is no way in which Northern Ireland could somehow be expelled from the UK against the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants.

17. But Article 1 does not stop there. It goes on to say that if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland, both the British and Irish Governments will support legislation to give effect to that wish.

18. Now clearly the majority do not wish for such a change at the moment or in the foreseeable future. The terrorists seem to believe that the views of the majority on this point will be changed by bombs, bullets and murder. They talk about British withdrawal but ignore the reality that there are one million Unionists who regard themselves as British. The apologists for the IRA pretend either that these people do not exist, or that their beliefs are somehow easily set aside and are not as deeply held as Irish republican views. Article 1 has destroyed this argument. The British Government has always maintained that the status of Northern Ireland must be determined by the wishes of a majority in Northern Ireland. The Agreement marks the acceptance of this position by the Irish Government as well. And the general election last year in the Republic of Ireland showed that the parties who share this view got 98% of the votes. On what authority, on whose behalf is the IRA's evil campaign of murder therefore being waged?

19. The fact is that nobody in Northern Ireland is going to be bombed into repudiating their sense of national identity. Coercion and the denial of basic democratic rights can never be the basis of consent. The continuation of the terrorist campaign is therefore doubly futile - first, because with increasing inevitability it brings down on its perpetrators severe punishment within the law, and second because it makes even more remote any prospect of achieving the goal which the terrorists have set for themselves. All who aspire to a united Ireland must surely accept that, in the words of Cardinal O'Fiaich, the Catholic Primate of All Ireland,

"... the only unity which would be worth having between North and South would be a union of hearts, a union of the people, not a union of two pieces of land".

20. Article 1 of the Agreement is therefore a prescription about the long-term future of Northern Ireland: it links potential developments with the evolution of popular feeling, with progress towards the "union of hearts". That is a just and sensible way to proceed, but it does not discharge the responsibility of Governments and politicians in both jurisdictions to focus on the governing of Northern Ireland now. We owe a duty to the future, but we owe a more immediate duty to the present. While long-term aspirations may differ, the urgent common interest of making the North a more peaceful, stable and humane society is, I believe, shared by the vast majority of people in Ireland - particularly parents who care about a better future for their children. And there is a wider responsibility too, which rests heavily on public figures in the

North. It is all too easy to make the habitual response, to argue the case for one's own tradition without acknowledging the validity of the other point of view. The great objective must be to heal rather than exacerbate the divisions which have afflicted the North for too long.

21. Finally I would like to mention the economy. Central to any long term and lasting settlement in Northern Ireland must be an improvement in the economic circumstances of the region, particularly a reduction in the high level of unemployment. As a small, open economy on the periphery of Europe, the North is particularly vulnerable to external forces and it has suffered sharply as the market conditions for many of its traditional, staple industries have changed. However, with the buoyant economic conditions and continued growth which characterise the UK national economy at present, Northern Ireland is well placed to experience economic resurgence and the Government is working hard to encourage this process. There is a high level of public expenditure in the North and very generous incentives for new capital investment: if you know of any French companies which wish to expand elsewhere in Europe, please assure them from me that location in Northern Ireland offers them a major business opportunity!

22. To sum up, a positive future for Northern Ireland lies through economic and political development and effective measures to combat the challenge of terrorism. The Anglo-Irish Agreement has a central

role, and I pay tribute to the constructive contribution of the Government of the Republic of Ireland. I have tried to give in this talk an indication of the policies the British Government is following to bring that positive future closer, and I should now be happy to try to answer any questions which you may have.