



Department for

Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Release of 1991 files at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



PRONI

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
1991 Highlighted Files	8
Central Secretariat.....	8
Department of Economic Development	22
Department of Education	23
Department of Finance and Personnel	25
Department of Health and Social Services	26
Northern Ireland Office	28

Using the documents

When using the documents held at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), please ensure that you acknowledge PRONI's custody of the original files and give the full PRONI document reference number.

Please note that in the 1991 file list; any file reference bearing 'A' at the end denotes the open part of a file which has been partially closed.

For example, the file *CENT/3/27A* refers to the open part of a file, whereas *CENT/3/27* refers to the part of that file withheld under certain Exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Copyright

Most public records in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland are subject to Crown Copyright. Crown copyright information previously available for re-use under waiver conditions can now be re-used under the terms of the Open Government Licence. The Open Government Licence was introduced in 2010 as a simpler set of terms and conditions for the re-use of a wide range of information covered by Crown Copyright. For further details of information covered by the licence, please see What the Open Government Licence covers at:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/government-licensing/whatogl-covers.htm>

PRONI ON CAIN

PRONI on CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) is a joint project between the Ulster University and PRONI which has resulted in digitised images of key documents from previous PRONI file releases being made freely available to view online for researchers and students. PRONI on CAIN includes over 1700 public records comprising 7,300 pages of content on the troubles and political developments from 1968-1987. For further details of the documents available, please visit

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/index.html>



Introduction

The files are being released under the 30/20 Year Rule.

The annual release of selected official files continues against a background of greater public access through the Freedom of Information Act balanced against the need to protect personal information. The FOI Act (2000) created a new access to information regime and all records were reviewed in accordance with both that Act and the Data Protection Act.

Annually since 1976, official records held by PRONI which were 30 years old have been reviewed with a view to making them publicly available (“the 30 year rule). In September 2011, the Assembly accepted a Legislative Consent Motion to reduce the time limit for release from 30 years to 20 years (“the 20 year Rule”). This is underpinned by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the amendments made to it by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The 20 Year Rule is being phased in over 10 years, with two years worth of records being reviewed and released each year. This year, the records of NI Departments and the NIO with terminal dates of 1991 are being brought forward for release during August 2017 and the records of 1992 are being brought forward for release during December 2017.

This process involves the referral of the files to the Responsible Authority for sensitivity review. This entails a page by page examination to ensure that a record contains nothing sensitive as defined by the FOI Act and DP Act.

Records Released

602 files being deemed as suitable for release as “fully open”. A further **189** files are open but subject to blanking out of some content. **94** files remain closed in full, the bulk of which are individual prisoner files and Honours files.

The main file series being released includes Central Secretariat and Northern Ireland Office files.

Some of the main issues covered by the 1991 release include:

- Political developments and talks between the Northern Ireland parties and the Secretary of State
- Cross border economic cooperation
- Community relations
- *SECRASP* papers (Social, Economic and Community Relations Aspects of Security Policy)
- Security legislation (including ministerial consideration of Emergency Provisions and Special Category)
- SACHR (Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights)
- Secretary of State's meetings with members of the PANI (Police Authority of Northern Ireland)
- US visits to Northern Ireland
- Fair employment (the MacBride principles)
- Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference
- Political Development Group papers
- Secretary of State's briefings on various NI issues
- Energy supply to NI (including primarily the key areas of Gas, Oil, Electricity)
- Ministerial group on Women's issues
- Child care policy (in the wake of the 1984-6 Hughes Inquiry)
- Care in the community (including mental health, AIDS, elderly, infant mortality)
- Extradition (and the associated execution of warrants)
- Anti-Racketeering activities
- Rural development

Records may be closed either fully or in part only. Blanking out involves the removal of a limited number of papers from the file that have been deemed as exempt from the right to know under FOI. To facilitate the release of as much information as possible, redaction can be used to blank out sensitive data within individual documents that would otherwise prevent release. All information which is withheld in the manner outlined above, however, must be retained in accordance with the exemptions contained within the FOI Act. In the majority of cases, the reason for extended closure was the application of section 40 – the *personal information* exemption – of the FOI Act. This means that personal information is exempt from the right to know if it would breach the Data Protection principles.

The catalogue of files for 1991 will be publicly available online on the PRONI website www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni from Friday 25th August and the files will also be available to view at PRONI from Friday 25th August.

These files are available to the media in advance of their release to the public on the strict understanding that **there is an embargo on publication or broadcast until 00.01am on Friday 25th August 2017.**



1991 Highlighted Files

Central Secretariat

CENT/1/18/34A 1989-1991 Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) Ministers Case Queries / Cabinet Papers

File contains detailed papers on a wide variety of issues, including the call from many quarters of society to repeal the withdrawal of funding for Irish cultural body,

Glor na nGael. This included correspondence from 'Protestants who have been taking part in Irish language courses at the Ulster Peoples College, Adelaide Park, Belfast' (September 1990).

CENT/1/17/37A 1988-1991 Consultative Papers on Local Government

File contains various matters of concern for Central Secretariat, with regard to the Councils. This included the issue of proportionality (political composition and balancing of the councils to reflect the community, and

looking at public appointments in general) and the fragile relations between Government and the District Councils.

CENT/1/16/4A 1987-1991 Central Community Relations Unit - Meetings with Community Relations Groups

File contains a miscellaneous arrangement of correspondence and responses on a wide variety of community relations issues, including NIO officials

responding to a particular viewpoint on women in working class communities, espoused by a representative of Quaker Peace and Service in her letter, in which she had suggested that 'conventional wisdom' held that women were unlikely to be targeted by paramilitary attack, feeling safer and therefore some felt able to use this apparent impunity to confront the moral injustice of the paramilitaries. They cited recent cases

where this was not the case and where security forces were blatantly dismissive of women being attacked by paramilitaries. NIO in their response contested this angle and took the view that women had historically always received equally brutal treatment at the hands of the paramilitaries and officials strongly contested the accusation that security forces were somehow complacent or dismissive of women being attacked in this manner, (December 1988).

CENT/1/18/29A 1989-1991 Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) Belfast City Council

File contains papers on the withdrawal of community relations funding (approximately £360,000 over three years), to Belfast City Council, due to their failure to

appoint community relations officers. Some councillors accused the NIO of playing an 'Anglo-Irish public relations' stunt, but it illustrated deepening problems between Local and Central Government. A number of Unionist councillors on Belfast Council charged that London was trying to dictate an agenda to them, (February 1991).

CENT/1/20/12A 1991-1991 Security and Political Affairs Departmental Machinery, Social, Economic and Community Relations Aspects of Security Policy Vol.2

File contains briefings and exchanges of viewpoints on a variety of key topics, including the killing by Royal Ulster

Constabulary of Kevin McGovern (29 September 1991) and the subsequent investigation, cross border road closures, meetings with local politicians (such as John Hume). Of critical importance to the Government (and to the success of the cross party talks and Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference) was the wider issue of cross border security and socio-economic problems faced by certain areas in Northern Ireland (primarily West Belfast, East Tyrone and South Armagh - listed as being 'traditional, hard-line nationalist areas') where it was accepted that each area had its own unique 'local characteristics, and so consideration of future action must take place in light of these local characteristics...'. Policing and the notion of depoliticising its presence in security operations was being considered, alongside the close support role that the Armed Forces played, (June 1991).

CENT/1/16/23A 1987-1991 Community Relations Meetings with Church Leaders

File contains correspondence, briefing papers and policy on the involvement of local church leadership in cross community relations, as part of a broader 'Cultural Traditions' initiative covering schools, the arts, museums

and local heritage. There was a general consensus that churches still had a key role to play in community relations, in fostering mutual respect and understanding without impinging on other peoples' theology or conscience. Beyond the local community situation, certain briefing papers illustrate how this was playing out against the broader developing political picture. In one confidential memo, following a dinner for three West Belfast Catholic Priests hosted by NIO officials, it was observed that the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) had made 'little impact in West Belfast because of lack of organisation and as a reflection of the fact that it was a party of individuals.'

There was also an observation in the same document that younger people in NI were turning away from violence. Glue and joyriding in working class areas were highlighted again as particular problems for young people with no real outlets for their frustrations and this in turn, it was observed, was encouraging groups like the IRA to justify their 'community police' role, (12 June 1990).

CENT/1/20/10A 1991-1991 Security and Political Affairs Departmental Machinery, Social, Economic and Community Relations Aspects of Security Policy Vol.1

File contains correspondence, briefing, policy documents and exchanges of viewpoints on significant

security and socio-economic issues affecting the border area and other parts of Northern Ireland. In one particularly detailed briefing paper which shed light on the British security methodology in the South Armagh border area, the vexatious issue of Army support to RUC officers operating in a tight knit local community was raised. The paper includes the acknowledgement by NIO officials that although the tour rotation of the military presence from what was an 'elite spearhead force', the Royal Marines, to a more 'regular' infantry unit, the Coldstream Guards, had been received somewhat positively by the community (in the sense that tensions has lessened and local community relations had improved), it

was in parallel conceded that the Marines' more rigorous operating style had noticeably lessened the grip of PIRA in the area, through their interdicting of paramilitary operations. Consequentially, this had the effect of allowing RUC to conduct more 'normal' police work, such as a successful reduction in drunk driving in the Forkhill locality. The same briefing suggested that the best approach was to work with the local community groups, to try to win hearts and minds, (24 May 1991).

In another briefing directly preceding this, and entitled '*Into the Alternative Universe – West Belfast*', the same NIO official spoke with candour of their work in that part of the capital, with its small close-knit communities living in the shadow of peace lines and daily sectarian attacks:

'My abiding impression, however, was one of being a character in a science fiction novel who had slipped into an alternative universe...having lived here on and off for many years now, and socialising in the city to a greater degree than many of my HCS colleagues. Yet I found myself in areas whose names I know very well indeed and which visually quite closely resemble parts of the city I do know well...but which were nevertheless, the main artery of the Falls excepted, almost as strange to me as the Forbidden City would have been to a Chinese before 1911...But I was not prepared to be made so quickly aware just how different areas were: from the suburbia in the further West and the shopping centre at Andersonstown which could be anywhere, to the different varieties of prosperity or dereliction in different housing estates. Most striking of all the beautiful – there is no other word – redevelopment being carried out by the NIHE right at the foot of the rotting cliff of Divis...from the 'futuristic / medieval' security force bases round the area to the high level of patrolling that day... Most important of all perhaps, I am more aware of how much I do not know', (20 May 1991).

CENT/1/20/14A 1991-1991 Social, Economic and Community Relations Aspect of Security Policy (SECRASP) Vol.3

File contains briefing and exchanges of viewpoints on a variety of important security and socio-economic matters, including the ongoing debate about.

the use of British military units to conduct direct support to local police patrols in some civilian areas, where local community relations were already very tense. One significant case study which NIO, local police, community and political representatives were

examining was the use of the The Parachute Regiment, in the Coalisland vicinity and a number of related serious incidents. In one confidential briefing paper on the importance of SECRASP and targeting local regions for assistance, penned by Paymaster General Lord Belstead to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, which was in draft (together with handwritten commentary), Lord Belstead concluded that 'we need to ensure that security force operations are planned, executed and followed up in full knowledge and intelligent assessment of their likely wider 'political' and community relations implications.'

In the Annex to above, handwritten comments accompany the suggested priority list of areas. Beside the typed sentence: 'It is proposed in the first instance that the Committee (SECRASP) should concentrate on West Belfast, East Tyrone and South Armagh,' the editor has circled the words 'South Armagh' and written: 'No! Fermanagh – more open to new approaches, variety of problems / opportunities...', (22 October 1991).

CENT/3/211A 1990-1990 Political Development in N.I.

File contains detailed papers on United Kingdom / Republic of Ireland Government ministerial meetings, talks with Northern Ireland political parties, revealing very significant insights from the numerous pre- and

post-meeting briefings, previously secret assessments and most notably including the detailed briefings for attention of Ministers from the NIO's Constitutional and Political Division / Political Affairs Division.

In one minute to the Prime Minister (copied to various senior colleagues including Geoffrey Howe, Douglas Hurd, Patrick Mayhew, Tom King, and Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler), a senior official (Quentin Thomas) provided a briefing on the latest developments on the political talks process. This document gives fascinating insight into Whitehall officials' careful navigation around various obstacles placed in the path of progress, such as certain political parties' preconditions and 'timetable' issues (and the use of strong terms such as 'impossible' in party responses). It also contains a 'Message to the Irish' (and subsequent Irish response) in which London sought to alleviate the concerns of Dublin on the health of the talks:

'It is certainly possible to read this as an Irish willingness to see the process pause – to 'camp on the racecourse.' And indeed there were signs in Dublin that they believe we can

tread water without great difficulty. My own appreciation is that we have reached the point where expectations are such that an attempt to tread water will result in the process getting waterlogged...but it is also possible to read the Irish letter as an indication that the Irish (and the SDLP) do indeed want the process to succeed, and in any event do not want its failure pinned on them...’.

Thomas personally assessed the situation with optimism but added an element of caution, noting that whilst the Irish are likely to want the process to succeed, they seemed content to ‘put it on ice’ for a while ‘with less turbulence than we believe to be the case...’

Thomas recommended meeting the Unionists and Alliance to address their worries over a specific timetable.

‘In short, the Irish Government may have much less room for manoeuvre than their letter suggests. But we should go through the motions of meeting their precondition so that they enter the process, if it does indeed continue, feeling satisfied with what they have extracted. (It goes without saying that there is little point in this if the price is that the Unionist leaders, who clearly have made major, and possibly dangerous, concessions already feel disgruntled in their turn...’, (2 July 1990).

CENT/3/208A 1988-1990 Anglo Irish Relations – General

File details Government deliberation around certain significant issues which were adversely affecting the Anglo Irish talks, most notably including ongoing inquests / investigations into the fatal shootings of

terrorism suspects by undercover RUC (the ‘Stalker Sampson’ investigations) or British Armed Forces units, the extradition of terrorism suspects and Human Rights law. In one exchange of correspondence between Charles Powell (Private Secretary to the Prime Minister), and the Foreign and Commonwealth Private Secretary Robert Culshaw, regarding the recent shooting incident in Gibraltar of three PIRA suspects by undercover British Army personnel (Operation Flavius), it was noted by Culshaw that:

‘Mr Haughey this afternoon implored us personally through HM Ambassador in Dublin to ensure that the bodies of the three PIRA terrorists shot in Gibraltar were kept out of the Republic at all costs. He made clear that he would not admit to this request in public. His first idea would presumably be that, rather than the charter firm with which the families are

negotiating, the Royal Air Force might fly the bodies direct to Belfast. This proposal is clearly designed to solve a problem confronting Mr Haughey. It has however the attraction for us that it could short-circuit the current plans of the terrorists relatives, to whom the bodies have been released today. The families, who are currently seeking to hire a charter aircraft, wish the bodies to be taken to Dublin in order that they may secure the maximum political advantage for Sinn Féin...there is also no guarantee that the families can be squared in the way Mr Haughey apparently envisages, in which case we would be left in the most invidious position of appearing to countenance a dubious bargain with Sinn Féin. We understand that one of the sticking points with the families is the use of Aldergrove airport, which is regarded as 'unionist territory'...'.

Powell responded to Culshaw: 'As I told you last night, I agree that is inconceivable that we should use the RAF to fly the bodies home. The problem of how to manage any problems in the Republic must be for Mr Haughey himself: after all he has done a good deal to create them...', (10-11 March 1988).

CENT/3/207A 1989-1990 Anglo Irish Agreement

File includes briefings and correspondence between officials detailing the various complex issues surrounding the ongoing Anglo Irish talks process. Most significantly, this details the numerous 'icebergs'

(matters of such importance that they could potentially scupper any political progress), such as Unionist preconditions to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and a Supreme Court legal challenge (asserting that the Agreement was 'incompatible with the Irish Constitution'), 'Accompaniment' (referring to policing in the unique circumstances presenting themselves in Northern Ireland), extradition, cross border security (and improved cooperation between the two respective sets of security forces). In one briefing paper entitled 'Record of Anglo-Irish Official Talks, Dublin, 27 February 1990', an NIO official noted the various attendees' comments:

'Mr Gallagher expressed great interest in the recent statements from Sinn Féin, and particularly from Martin McGuinness. Were they worried they were being left out of something? Did their disillusionment reflect the recent Ard Fheis, or developments in Eastern Europe? Were they a late fruit of the SDLP / Sinn Féin talks? Was Adams disillusioned because of the political failure of Sinn Féin in the South? Why was

McGuinness of all people taking a lead? Mr Burns said it was clear that the debate between the bullet and the ballot was not dying away. Perhaps the Derry brigade of the IRA was taking a softer position now, though all this could also be a tactic to spoil political development... Mr Gallagher thought the Derry IRA might be influenced by the death of the two old people in a booby trap bomb, the killing of Love, and by economic rehabilitation of the North West. Could we do the same in West Belfast? Mr Burns said that Derry was self-contained in a way that Belfast could not be, and that the local politicians in nationalist Derry were more effective than those in Belfast...'

CENT/1/20/63A 1991-1991 Political Development Talks Steering Group (Vol. 4.)

File contains detailed briefings on the ongoing Anglo Irish talks process. In one memo (21 October 1991), an NIO official observes the Democratic Unionist Party MP and Deputy Leader, Peter Robinson's stance:

'While some may regard Mr Robinson's views as disheartening, in that they add to the burden of evidence that we will not see a resumption of political talks this side of a general election, my reading of what you say in paragraph 7 in particular is that, there do seem, on the Unionist side, grounds for believing that we could continue with political dialogue (eg on procedural issues) even after the Secretary of State's search for a basis on which talks could resume runs out of steam from Mid-November onwards. Thereby providing, assuming the nationalists co-operate, an honourable end, or "intermission", in the talks process – while avoiding the political dangers for us (and for the parties) of generating a political vacuum through the winter...I was particularly interested also in what you had to say about "independence" and what Mr Robinson saw as HMG's attitude to the Union...It is easy to see how a climate of frustration and uncertainty might generate such ideas – or even how our statements on the constitutional issue might not always be properly understood...One reading of your minute suggests that Mr Robinson may see himself as the statesman who would crystallise Protestant sentiment around this notion...'

CENT/1/20/57A 1991-1991 Anglo Irish 'Diner'

File details the key matters to be considered for discussion at the 26th July Anglo Irish 'Diner' (one of a series which occurred), and sheds light on the often hidden machinations of a high level political talks.

process, the 'do's and 'don'ts', private negotiations and confidential meetings that occurred in satellite to the actual main event. Some examples of the finer details of the AI 'Diner' 'etiquette' include the last minute instructions from Quentin Thomas (aforementioned NIO official from CENT/3/211A) to Sir Robin Butler, Cabinet Secretary, on the pre-'Diner' meeting planned between Sir Robin and Dermot Nally (the Irish Government Secretary):

'Our main aim is to avoid creating any new mechanism which could turn into a rerun of the Armstrong / Nally group which renegotiated the Anglo Irish Agreement. We want, without rebuffing the Taoiseach, to avoid establishing a twin track political policy for Northern Ireland, in which our key priority – negotiating terms for fresh Brooke initiative talks – became submerged in a formal in-depth review of Anglo-Irish relations based on a mistaken assumption that any comprehensive accommodation could be imposed on, rather than negotiated with, the parties...there is a possibility (although not one which we have been warned to expect) that Dermot Nally may seek to hand you a paper in the course of your tete a tete. In this event it would be very desirable – if you felt the circumstances permitted – not to accept the paper as a formal basis for continuing work but to invite Mr Nally and his colleagues to speak to it in the Diner...there is one additional point of substance which we think should be raised with Mr Nally during your private discussion. This is the complex of apparent Irish misconceptions reported in Stephen Wall's letter of 14 July about Mr Mulroney's conversation with the Prime minister about his recent talk with the Taoiseach. Even allowing for some muddled transmission, there is some separate collateral for some potentially very dangerous Irish wishful thinking here. The main reported assumptions are: (a) that PIRA will disband if the Irish Government makes it clear that it will not amend Articles 2 and 3; (b) that a multi-national Old Commonwealth peacekeeping force might be a runner for Northern Ireland; and (c) (not mentioned in Stephen Wall's letter) that the British side is contemplating setting a date for withdrawing British troops...Nick Fenn (Researchers note: UK Ambassador to Dublin) suggests that you might come clean with Dermot Nally about the provenance of points

(a) and (b) – ie that they have been reported by Mr Mulroney – since he is a respectable source, giving us a legitimate peg on which to hang our correction of these misconceptions, while also enabling us to say to the Irish that we quite understand that the message may have become muddled in transmission...’,(24 July 1991).

CENT/1/20/51A 1991-1991 Political Developments – Vol. 3. April 1991

File contains detailed papers on United Kingdom/ Republic of Ireland Government ministerial pre- and post-meeting briefings / meetings and talks with Northern Ireland political parties largely from the NIO’s

Constitutional and Political Division / Political Affairs Division. There is much mention on the frustration between various officials at the mid May deadlock and subsequent breakdown of the talks after ‘18 months of painstaking work...’ and of Government attempts to reassure Unionists about the future of the Union.

In one note penned by the Private Secretary to Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, following the 13 May 1991 Bilateral meeting between Government and Unionist leadership, it was observed that:

‘Dr Paisley began by saying that the Unionist leaders were worried by the implications of the Irish Government agreeing almost immediately to the Secretary of State’s proposition of 26 March. Their situation was a difficult one, and they could not continue talking if they were placed under constant duress. Unionist members had been publicly insulted over the weekend, having been referred to as “headless chickens” and with some members publicly being accused of being liars. There could be no negotiations in such an atmosphere...Unionist leaders wanted the talks to succeed, While they were no youngsters, his (Dr Paisley’s) people were young, younger than Mr Molyneaux’s and were looking for a future for Northern Ireland...’,(15 May 1991).

CENT/1/15/33A 1986-1991 Coinage – Regional Variations

File details the unusually complex debate surrounding the search for a suitable design for the new Northern Ireland £1 coin. The Royal Mint had recommended to the Chancellor that all regional variations (England,

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) would feature a 'heraldic beast.'

An Elk was chosen for Northern Ireland (being one of the supporting elements of the coat of arms of the former Government of Northern Ireland). This had at the time been chosen by Jim Prior as more suitable than shamrocks, harps, Cross of St Patrick, six pointed stars or the Red Hand, all of which offered various problems in terms of being associated with one or other community ('too Irish' or 'too Protestant').

As such, the Mint had suggested the return to the older heraldic beasts which would hopefully offend neither community. However, the Garter King of Arms was only willing to accept the depiction of an elk on coins in Northern Ireland if it was first established as a Royal Badge for Northern Ireland, that is to say, if the elk was mounted on a badge or shield. To add to the confusion, Royal Heraldry had never recognised the partition of Ireland and the existing Royal Badge of Ireland (the Crowned Harp) was viewed as an 'All-Ireland' symbol (which by extension caused unsettlement as it too closely resembled the Republic of Ireland's symbol).

To create a Royal Badge expressing sovereignty over Northern Ireland alone would reflect on the status of the existing badge (the crowned harp, used by the RUC) and would therefore require amendment of the Royal Arms to show the loss of sovereignty over the Republic. As one official noted, this would be a political hornets' nest...'

Finally, after much consideration, NIO Constitutional and Political Division confirmed that the Secretary of State had agreed to an image of an elk without the problem-causing shield.

CENT/1/16/27A 1987-1987 Political Developments January 1987 – March 1987

This highly significant file includes ministerial briefings for meetings, papers and correspondence surrounding ongoing talks in the wake of the Anglo Irish Agreement with Northern Ireland political parties, papers which have

largely been created by the NIO's Constitutional and Political Division / Political Affairs Division.

This includes one "Note for the Record" created by the Political Affairs Division for the eyes of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland:

'I was contacted today by a leading unionist politician who was present at the joint UUP /

DUP policy meeting held in London on Thursday and Friday of last week. His purpose in making the contact was to pass on a provisional policy decision, made at that meeting, that the unionist leaders would be making an approach to the Prime Minister seeking a meeting. He said that the present position had changed in that the incoming government in the Republic was making noises about Article 1 and the new Taoiseach was not a signatory to the Agreement. He also led me to believe that there was some concern in more moderate unionist circles that the deep seated dislike of Haughey would lead to greater violent unionist activity if he “landed at Stormont in a helicopter.” This contact (who claimed to have led the move towards opposing an approach to the Prime Minister) said he was concerned that this approach should not meet with a rebuff from the Prime Minister. His aim in making this possible turn of events known in advance was to ensure that it passed on to smooth the way... he was confident that a suitably neutral form of words would be reached so that “even Robinson” could agree (24 February 1987).’

In another Political Division Group options paper entitled “Changing the Climate” (18 February 1987), one NIO official recommended the strategy for the next six months: ‘...it is unlikely that the Unionist parties as a whole will be induced to make any public or major move away from their present intransigence. Nevertheless we should work on them. Courses open to us include the following: (a) We can continue our very discreet efforts at a senior level to engage the support of influential figures in Northern Ireland in encouraging political dialogue between representatives of the constitutional parties.

(b) At a lower level, we can cultivate and improve our existing contacts with Unionist opinion formers, to encourage what movement there is towards political dialogue, with Government or between the parties. We should stimulate realistic discussion of the options for devolution and of the implications for the working of the Intergovernmental Conference...’

CENT/1/20/59A 1991-1991 Political Development Talks - Steering Group Vol. 3

File includes briefing papers from the NIO's Constitutional and Political Division / Political Affairs Division. Of note, an briefing from Political Affairs Division, (30 August 1991) entitled ‘The Political “Talks”

Scene’, which gives a highly detailed assessment of the political parties and the significant actors on the stage at this critical time in terms of the Anglo Irish process, and

an insight into their motivations, strengths and weaknesses. The timing of this document was approximately eight weeks following the Secretary of State closing down the talks, a period which had been, as the NIO official noted:

‘exceptionally quiet following the intense activity during May and June. The note therefore is inevitably impressionistic and in many areas raises questions rather than gives definitive answers. It also concentrates on the Unionists, since they hold the key to any resumption of political talks during the Autumn...’

‘John Hume is exasperated by the behaviour of the Unionists at Stormont, but is probably ready for one more go...he is astute enough to have worked out that time is on his side and he will be loath to participate in anything which might make his vision harder to achieve...’

‘...there have been clear indications that he (Paisley) is very aware of his religious fundamentalists, who are against any political compromise, and instinctively favours them over the career politicians such as Robinson. This was apparent in the relative dominance of McCrea during the Talks...if it comes to a stark choice Paisley is more likely to block political progress than damage his church...it is clear that Molyneaux provides some stability in the Paisley / Molyneaux relationship. He seems to be the more cunning and steady operator...Paisley is also the key factor in selling any political package to the wider unionist community; more than Molyneaux he is the authentic voice of gut unionism...we think that Paisley would like McCrea to succeed him...’

‘there is little real talent in the Alliance Party apart from Alderdice himself...his style of leadership is becoming almost presidential...’

‘it is now apparent that Robinson, despite (or perhaps because of) what he is prepared to say to us in private, cannot shift Paisley as much as we had thought, at least in the short term...Dodds is highly intelligent and wants movement not least to further his own career; but he is not a positive leader and will not break with Paisley, on whose patronage he depends...’

‘Although not a constitutional political party, the position of Sinn Fein must be taken into account. They are certainly a factor in John Hume’s calculations and there remains the possibility – brought into sharper focus by Adams’ apparent demarche on 21 August – that they might seek to come in from the cold. The Unionists will be watching this area closely and be quick to detect any apparent softening of our stance towards them...’

CENT/3/215A 1988-1989 Article 11 Review (Vol. 1.)

File details the Government deliberation over the potential 'Pandora's Box' of initiating Anglo Irish Agreement, Article 11, which decreed that after three years from the Agreement being signed, a full review of

Articles 2-10 of the Agreement (Article 1 being exempt) would occur. There was concern in Whitehall that this review could go too far, leading to 'major surgery' on the Agreement. Papers detail the consideration given to the various Articles, including Article 9, 'cross border security matters' (this strand being led primarily by the Chief Constable of RUC and the Garda Commissioner), including one assessment by NIO official:

'Enhancing security co-operation is likely to remain, extradition apart, the most important issue in Anglo-Irish relations in which we are 'demanders'...'

The official went on to note how much pressure the IRA was under in the Republic of Ireland, and completed their report to Secretary of State NI by recommending that he recognise positive cross border progress on security between Dublin and Belfast, and that he 'nevertheless avoid counter-productive criticism of the Irish, and Garda, for past failures, but concentrate on the need for future, increasingly effective collaboration...'

(February 1989).



Department of Economic Development

DED/22/59A 1990-1991 MacBride Principles – Clerical Interests (Roman Catholic)

File contains correspondence, press cuttings, reports and papers on the ongoing debate surrounding Fair Employment and the MacBride Principles and the

attempts by UK Government to bring much needed US investment to Northern Ireland (mainly through the work of the Industrial Development Board). Government saw the MacBride campaign as creating 'a level of hassle in the United States' and as one IDB official noted, MacBride 'attempted to influence investors in such a way that they would consider Northern Ireland an unattractive place to be seen to be investing in...' He went on to stress that the 'problem related to the campaign rather than the principles and that this was understandable given the nature of many of the people involved with the campaign and their associations with INC and Noraid...'

He also noted that significant figures such as John Hume and Bishop Cahal Daly had spoken out against MacBride in the United States, (30 January 1990).



Department of Education

ED/13/2/1020 1988-1991 Travelling People - General Policy

File deals with government attempts to provide education for children of the Travelling community, particularly given (as one official termed it) the 'unusual needs' of that ethnic group, and that Travellers were 'sensitive about official record keeping...'. One Department of Education memo (May 1991) noted the underlying problems with 'endemic ills, such as home conditions, unsettled living patterns and parental lack of understanding...'. The official went on to state that: 'we have put much effort into improving the lot of Traveller Children. Progress has been made in a number of places over a number of years. Unless we can find some kind of supplementary formula to help those who have to provide an appropriate curriculum for this, our main cultural minority, we run the risk of losing much of what has been achieved...'

ED/13/2/1024 1989-1991 Making Belfast Work – West Belfast Monitoring Papers 1989/90

File details the government attempts, in the education sector, to improve the overall economic and social conditions of a number of key areas of need in Belfast, but in the course of this file it is clear that the local community Belfast Action Teams were highly concerned at the policy which they viewed as leaving certain areas 'forgotten.' There was therefore anger and disillusionment at the Government policy in these areas which suffered from a familiar collection of key factors, high unemployment, and majority of public housing and low income households. One memo notes that: 'there is a general trend for both Protestant and Catholic churches to have less influence in the community than in the past. The Protestant churches are generally not united and typically the established churches have congregations which are not resident in the immediate locality but have family links...Some of the church organisations would be evangelical in their approach and put less emphasis on social action than on spiritual matters...while there are high levels of economic activity in certain areas, the converse is also true with high levels of unemployment. There is a high level of economic dependency on Harland and

Wolff and Shorts. This has led to a general lowering of community morale particularly in East Belfast...', (August 1989).



Department of Finance and Personnel

**DFP/6/150A 1987-1990 Finance Branch – Leakage of Public Funds to
Paramilitary Organisations**

File deals with Government response to the threat to public money, a proportion of which was finding its way to illegal paramilitary organisations through legitimate

public organisations. The Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service at that time, Ken Bloomfield, gave the following stark assessment:

'We are facing ruthless and determined people who are capable of considerable sophistication in handling financial matters. They are able to hide behind "front men", to operate through one or two key people on otherwise respectable bodies, and to develop successful means of "laundering" money. They are skilled at concealing their activities within apparent legal frameworks and outwardly legitimate organisations... finally it is likely that firmer action by Government will result in more protests by public representatives, community leaders and others who will not be aware of the extent of paramilitary involvement. Given our difficulty in producing in public the hard evidence behind our decisions*, there will, I am afraid, continue to be problems in public presentational terms, which we will have to handle carefully in each case.'

(20 August 1986)

(*researchers note: decisions mainly to withdraw or withhold public funding for such apparently legitimate community organisations)



Department of Health and Social Services

HSS/13/45/85 1988-1991 Child Abuse Miscellaneous / Research

File covers the Government response to the 1984-6 Hughes Inquiry and other prominent investigations (such as the 1987 Cleveland Inquiry led by Lord Justice Butler-Sloss) and a subsequent reappraisal of Health and

Social Services policy and practice relating to the care of children and young people, in the wake of the investigations.

Lord Justice Butler-Sloss had recommended a re-education programme for the judiciary in conducting child abuse cases, due to a widely held perception (and led by high profile figures such as Dame Esther Rantzen) that the justice system was not punishing child abusers nor was it supporting the victims adequately. Papers cover the international debate, and shows how experts were moving from previously held, out of date theories towards a more accurate identification of signs of abuse, better abuser profiles and a joined up strategy to tackle the problem (including retraining front line professionals like nurses, teachers etc., to deal with possible abuse presenting itself in schools, and hospitals).

**HSS/13/48/19 1991-1991 Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
Northern Ireland Committee**

File details the Government interdepartmental working group tasked with responding to the AIDS / HIV threat, including progress on a retrovirus, dealing with

discrimination and the international angle (including the developing situation in the UK, USA and Africa at that time). It was noted in one official memo that it had been accepted by Government at that point (c. Spring 1991) that AIDS HIV affected not only 'drug users and homosexuals' but anyone who had unprotected sex or had received a contaminated blood transfusion, etc. The official went on to say that as of Autumn 1989, the perception had been more limited in scope, and naïve in terms of who was at risk. He stated that the low incidence of AIDS HIV in Northern Ireland in 1991 'should not lead to complacency

and Government action was necessary in such fields as insurance, prisons, employment, social issues and attitudes and tourism...’.

Also, the Northern Ireland specific health response is illustrated, as the government tried to address training, understanding and awareness amongst medical professionals.



Northern Ireland Office

NIO/10/9/20A 1988-1991 Security in the Border Areas

File contains correspondence on the resumption of the use of explosives by security forces to effectively close remote border crossing points which historically had been used by paramilitaries to evade security forces.

This was a controversial method which had not been used since the early 1980s, and one which inevitably incurred complaints and compensation claims from the local community. Also mentioned, the legally complex matter of trans-border observation, pursuit and interdiction by UK security forces of paramilitaries (or their suspect devices), where jurisdiction was uncertain and where the 'danger zone' of an incident might extend into ROI territory.

NIO/28/1/12A 1990-1991 Personal Copy Correspondence for Mr W. Gallagher

File details contingency and emergency planning matters, specifically the threat from nuclear, biological or chemical weapons (whether in 'wartime' or 'peacetime' and whether used intentionally or accidentally) or an

accident involving NBC materials (as was the case in Chernobyl, Ukraine 1986). In one piece of correspondence between NIO officials on the potential threat from weapons of mass destruction, it was noted: 'I am sure you can envisage the panic which would follow an announcement by PIRA that a small (!) nuclear, device had been placed in Belfast City Centre and would be detonated at a certain time if demands were not met...', (25 January 1991).

