



Department for

Communities

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Release of 1992 files at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



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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 1992 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.

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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 1968-1988. 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 were 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

481 files being deemed as suitable for release as “fully open”. A further **158** files are open but subject to blanking out of some content. **43** 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.

Some of the main significant issues covered by the 1992 release include:

- Political developments and talks between the Northern Ireland parties and the Secretary of State
- *SECRASP* papers (Social, Economic and Community Relations Aspects of Security Policy)
- Cross border economic cooperation
- Security legislation (including ministerial consideration of Emergency Provisions and Special Category)
- US / Northern Ireland relations, specifically fair employment (the MacBride principles)
- Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference
- British/Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body
- Political Development Group papers
- Secretary of State's briefings on various NI issues
- Child abuse
- Fisheries
- Historic Monuments
- Industrial development
- Economic impact of tourism
- Youth training
- Anti-Racketeering activities and paramilitary influence in the construction industry
- Rural development
- NI Film Council

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 1992 are publicly available online on the PRONI website www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni and the files are also available to view at PRONI.



1992 Highlighted Files

Department of Agriculture

**AG/68/2 1989-1992 Ballinamore / Ballyconnell Canal and other Cross
Border Issues**

File details the proposed re-opening of the canal which would link the Erne and Shannon waterways. Papers assess the economic, environmental and technical viability.

In one paper penned by David Fell (dated 22nd June 1990), it was noted that UK Government was trying to use a £5 million 'deposit' which had previously been paid by them to the Republic of Ireland Government for the Kinsale Gas Field pipeline, but which was subsequently retained by Dublin when the Kinsale operation was cancelled. Fell argued that this deposit: 'might become a possible bargaining tool to be deployed by HMG in forthcoming discussions with the Irish on the Canal... Given the attitude of the ROI in the past, and given the possibility that they may have noted that the £5 million was written off in the 1986/87 Appropriation Accounts, the prospects of them being willing at this stage to make a partial repayment must be regarded as very slim, if judged in isolation. On the other hand, if a partial repayment of the £5 million deposit were the price to the ROI of securing the politically desirable Ballinamore / Ballyconnell Canal project, they might just be willing to negotiate...'

Both Governments subsequently proceeded with the project to restore the Canal and link the Erne and Shannon waterways, at a cost of around £30 million.

Central Secretariat

CENT/1/20/18 1991-1992 British Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

File contains briefings for visits by the BIIPB to Northern Ireland, arrangements for visits and voluminous correspondence about the impact of the European single market and reports on European affairs, and cross border trade.

CENT/1/21/23 1991-1992 North / South Exchanges

File contains details of ongoing North/South engagement at an official level. There is also a paper by George Quigley entitled 'Ireland – An Island Economy', following a speech given to the CBI and analysis of the paper by officials.

CENT/1/21/26 1992-1992 Political Development Talks 1992 Steering Group

File contains detailed papers of the Political Development Group / Constitutional and Political Division on a wide variety of issues, including the gap

after the election and the resumption of cross party talks. Also noted, the territorial claim in Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution, which were proposed to be replaced by an aspiration towards unification by consent and as discussed in one memo from the Talks Planning Unit, the detail of 'how any new NI Executive (or Administration) is formed and in particular what role in it is accorded to minority community representatives...' (dated May 1992).

In another PDG memo entitled 'Strategic Issues / Talks Collapse Scenario / "Beyond the Crunch!"', it was noted that:

'The talks would break down if the SDLP (and the Irish?) dug their heels in. but did they fully appreciate the effects of such a breakdown? If they thought they would be in a better, or even just the same, position as when entered the talks, they could be mistaken. It was considered that the Unionists had "played the game" and taken risks in the talks so far, whereas the SDLP had not. Feelings towards both camps afterwards may consequently be different...', dated 21st May 1992.

CENT/1/20/70A 1991 Anglo-Irish Conference Papers From November 1991 to December 1991

File contains a wide array of papers and issues, mainly generated from the NIO Political Development Group but also including papers from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and mainly related to the sessions of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. Subjects vary from the provision of Irish language education and literature in prisons, local government boundaries, cross border trade, community relations, to the use of lethal force by security forces, publicised incidents involving Royal Marines Commandos allegedly harassing vessels on Carlingford Lough, Irish Army servicemen allegedly colluding with PIRA, RAF helicopters straying over the border and the overall security situation in Northern Ireland.

CENT/1/20/64A 1989-1991 CCRU Briefing Submissions Part 1

File contains briefings and correspondence from the Central Community Relations Unit, whose broad remit included all matters affecting the communities in Northern Ireland. This included the administration of justice, combatting terrorism, fair employment, economic development in areas of deprivation, Irish language, NORAIID (and its US funding for the Republican movement), plastic baton rounds usage by security forces, prisons (and the use of strip search), the deployment of the Ulster Defence Regiment, Diplock Courts and the recognition and embracing of diverse cultural traditions.

CENT/1/20/65A 1991 Central Community Relations Unit (C.C.R.U.) Equality – Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (S.A.C.H.R.)

File contains a major SACHR report (the 2nd report of its kind and over 230 pages) submitted through the Secretary of State NI to the NI Government, on 'religious and political discrimination and equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland'. In handwritten feedback (dated 15th October 1990) on the report passed between officials, it was noted by Government officials that the SACHR viewpoint was as follows:

'in the past, government has been good as implementing "soft" recommendations, e.g. social and environmental, but very poor in accepting "hard" recommendations, e.g. law and order, security and human rights. The latter issues tend to be more on the NIO side...'

A number of the later papers relate to subsequent 'meetings with the Irish side', during November 1990, to deal with the multitude of issues raised by the Commission. In one such note (dated 21st November 1990), officials stated that:

'Mr Walker commented that the contribution of both traditions in Northern Ireland to the cultural heritage of the Province was well recognised. Irish language had a part to play but it was necessary to underline that the British Government were not and would not be working towards bilingualism. Great strides had been made in assisting the development of the Irish language and while the pace of progress might not suit everybody it had to be recognised that the British Government had done a great deal. The British Government were well aware of the need to depoliticise the Irish language...those who doubted the British Government's commitment and work in this area should contrast the position now with that which obtained 10 years ago. The quiet but progressive approach which had been adhered to during that period had succeeded in developing the Irish language while avoiding negativism and divisiveness...'

CENT/3/221A 1990 Political Developments – 'Consensus Government – Scheme for a Model

File contains a very large number of formerly marked secret or confidential, high level papers on the ongoing party political talks, which were at this point focussing on possible solutions to the impasse in the wake of the Anglo Irish Agreement, including devolution. Some attention is given to the role of the Holy See in the complex theological and political argument surrounding the Catholic Church and its viewpoint on excommunicating those found guilty of terrorist crimes or committing acts of politically motivated violence.

However, of most interest are the incisive assessments of the various arms of the NIO apparatus (particularly Constitutional & Political Division and Political Affairs Division) and the revealing faxes from the UK Ambassador to Dublin (Sir Nicholas Fenn) to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, interpreting the stalemate situation on the NI political stage.

Fenn suggests in one update (dated 6th March 1990) that much of the lack of progress was largely due to Irish Government and SDLP contentment at a 'status quo' (where any new but failed talks would inevitably result in a potential damaging blow to the SDLP, especially cast in the shadow of a growing Sinn Fein election machine). Also, he goes on to suggest a list of next moves for the Secretary of State, Peter Brooke, to take:

'Finally, we could leak Irish intransigence. We could expect an unusually sympathetic hearing in Dublin outside Government circles. For once, there is a prospect of an Anglo-Irish row in which a substantial section of Irish opinion – and indeed international opinion – would support us against the Irish Government...'

Much debate in the file revolves around the inclusion of Sinn Fein and the PIRA in political talks.

An NIO official noted in one observation (of possible moves to bring Sinn Fein into the talks), that 'while Sinn Fein is inextricably bound up with PIRA...' he conceded that:

'to some extent Sinn Fein is a separate political entity. Our attitude to it crucially turns on the extent to which it is engaged in legitimate and constitutional political activity...it seems that to me we have no inherent interest in preferring the SDLP to Sinn Fein or any other potential movement speaking for nationalism provided it adopts a constitutional road...and if it brought with it the strain of anti-clericalism which I detect in Sinn Fein that might have interesting possibilities for levering open the somewhat theocratic structures of Northern and Southern nationalism to the benefit of an accommodation with the Unionist community...Indeed, while I think it is right for most purposes to treat PIRA/Sinn Fein as a collective entity, we should sometimes pause to remember that that sometimes may be a misleading or even distorting view. Clearly, only a very small minority of those who vote for Sinn Fein are members of PIRA and/or actually practice violence...we should be careful about equating "support for violence" with the number of people who actually vote Sinn Fein...some Unionist politicians have indicated a greater enthusiasm for violence than some Sinn Fein councillors...the area where there may be scope to develop our policies, I suspect, is in our response to the positive constitutional aspects of Republicanism...much is being done on the Irish language as part of a wider policy – consistent with the Anglo-Irish Agreement – of responding to the validity of the two traditions, culturally and otherwise...', dated 14th February 1990.

Also discussed with a broader reference to border security, it was noted by an official that Peter Bottomley, PPS to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, had

suggested (after his visit to a British Army border base – the Cloghogue / Killeen Permanent Vehicle Checkpoint / Observation Tower) that:

‘The observation tower inevitably looked untidy, since it was necessary to deploy shields and barbed wire around it in order to detonate rockets and mortar shells before they hit the main structure. Mr Bottomley commented that this was simply a design problem: he was sure that an imaginative way could be found to smarten up and decorate security structures in a way that would not be out of keeping with their function but would at the same time produce a pleasingly aesthetic effect on travellers. A large sign saying “Welcome to the Killeen checkpoint” would be a good start. He also wondered whether advertising space might not be sold on the observation tower...’.

CENT/1/20/69A 1991

Political Developments – Minutes of Meetings – May 1991

File contains a large number of high level papers on the political party talks, including many briefings and ‘notes’ of meetings, often created by the myriad of NIO units tasked with choreographing and interpreting the extremely complex political situation, from the UK Government side.

File also contains Ministerial and Ambassadorial correspondence which again reveal much hitherto unknown information about the talks process as seen from ‘within’. Of great concern to all parties was the physical location for the second strand of the talks, in terms of the strong symbolism of places such as Dublin Castle’s ‘Throne Room’ or Parliament Buildings, Stormont. At one point, dated 9th May 1991, Dr Paisley suggested the Isle of Man as a neutral location, which was rejected.

One note, dated 2nd May 1991, dictated by Dr Brian Mawhinney, Minister of State, NIO, following a recent telephone conversation with Dr John Alderdice, the Alliance Party leader, illustrates the problems even with agreeing on a suitable location for the talks to be held.

Mawhinney noted the Alliance leader’s concerns for the venue for the second strand of the talks, which had then been agreed as Parliament Buildings, Stormont estate. Alderdice had stated that:

‘The process had already begun to find a home and should build on that.’

He went on to tell Dr Mawhinney that his party would talk to anybody, anywhere but that

'his main reason for ringing was to report in confidence a private conversation he had had last night with Nigel Dodds. He was worried because the party appeared to be taking a firm line on the venue for Strand 2 which was likely not to coincide with the views of others. He thought that they were keen not to wreck the process over this, but nevertheless he thought they would be fairly robust tomorrow morning. I explained to him the problems of accommodation in the intellectual / emotional and physical senses of that word which he totally accepted. For both reasons he endorsed our view that this issue needed to be resolved at the beginning.'

Also very revealing are the highly detailed Notes of Bilateral Meetings held between political party delegations and UK Government 'teams' (usually led by the Secretary of State for NI). In one such bilateral at Parliament Buildings with the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, the official from NIO's Talks Secretariat unit noted that Mr Robinson:

'Had drawn attention to some practical matters which were still causing difficulty. Dr Paisley had, that morning, been locked out of his room and his toilet and none of the DUP's word-processing equipment was working. Dr Paisley added a complaint about being asked to show his pass when he entered the (Parliament) building. Responding to this last point the Secretary of State said that he thought in the early stages it was best to err on the side of punctilio¹ but that he was sure things would settle down. Dr Paisley said that he had heard that John Hume has been asked to open his car boot on Tuesday and that his concern was that incidents like this would mean that people's tempers would be frayed before they even sat down at the table...'

In matters political, Dr Paisley went on to state that:

'he recognised that the Secretary of State could not stop the Irish Government holding a referendum² but warned that this was the rock on which everything might break...to give the Republic a veto over Northern Ireland's internal political arrangements would be worse than the Anglo-Irish Agreement; it would be like 'a dog returning to its vomit...', dated 8th May 1991.

(¹ to behave correctly, to adhere to procedure)

(² on Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution)

CENT/3/220A 1989 Satellite Accidents – COSMOS 1900

File contains detailed papers on the UK Government emergency planning response ('Operation Starburst') in the event of a nuclear powered satellite crashing to

earth in Northern Ireland. This was in light of the expected re-entry (early-October 1988) to earth's atmosphere of the Soviet 'Cosmos 1900' satellite and uncertainty over its eventual crash site and importantly whether its nuclear reactor core would (as intended in event of a malfunction) detach from the satellite and disintegrate safely or if the entire radioactive item would plummet into the fields of Northern Ireland.

One letter from Home Secretary Douglas Hurd to Prime minister Margaret Thatcher (and copied to Secretary of State for Northern Ireland), briefed on the possible outcomes. In the wake of the Chernobyl disaster several years earlier, the Home Secretary gave the recommended public health advice (which he admitted was unpalatable), that the public be advised

'To stay indoors, or at least in the protection provided by a vehicle, for the final 90 minutes if the UK lies under the final orbit and the safety device has failed.' (dated 27th September 1988)

However, a satisfactory conclusion to the anticipated potential disaster was communicated (via restricted fax) to all Chief Constables in United Kingdom on Saturday 1st October 1988, announcing that

'It now appears that the automatic safety devices on Cosmos 1900 have functioned correctly and that the reactor core has been ejected into a higher orbit and will not return to earth with the body of the satellite.'

(The main satellite body eventually burned up as hoped during re-entry, not over Northern Ireland, but high over the Congo, at 11.15pm Saturday night.)

CENT/1/21/27A 1992 CCRU: Equality – Irish Language Policy (Part 3)

File contains papers on the promotion of Irish language in Northern Ireland life when set against the backdrop of the European Convention on Minority Languages. This

was a difficult matter for UK Government to solve, affecting many aspects of society, from Irish street signs, the provision of Irish-medium primary schooling in Belfast and Derry~ Londonderry and supplying Irish language teachers and literature in prison establishments. One 'flashpoint issue' was the Queens University Belfast Student Union bi-lingual policy, which had split opinions in an NIO survey dramatically, with a section of the campus feeling that the policy was designed to alienate some and was being exploited for political gain. In a similar vein, one survey respondent from the Unionist background replied that the argument for playing the National Anthem at graduation ceremonies was similarly being exploited and was designed to erode one culture (dated November 1992)

CENT/1/19/47 1990 CCRU: Equality – Reducing Community Differentials

File details the Government attempts to look at inconsistencies in Protestant and Catholic community experience in Northern Ireland, ranging from

employment to education and housing. In one report which considered the respective achievements in schooling for both communities, it acknowledged that whilst some 'statistically insignificant' numbers of children (dubbed in this document 'cross overs') attended a school of a different faith (i.e. catholic children attending protestant voluntary grammar school or vice versa), the main picture was clearer to summarise. A 'virtually 50/50 split' of protestant and catholic children taking the 11+ exam, indicating a 'broadly similar' standard overall for state and catholic primary schools, dated December 1989. However, in one note from Economic and Social Division, it was highlighted that the overall figure of catholic children leaving school without qualifications was 19.5% (1987-88) set against a figure of 13.7% for protestant children, dated January 1990.

CENT/1/20/67A 1991 CCRU: Community Relations General Matters Part 5

File contains papers on the Government efforts with community relations groups in various areas of deprivation and socio economic need. In one

assessment by NIO's Political Affairs Division focusing on Carrickmore, County Tyrone, NIO officials noted that although it was a settlement with 'a few protestant families', and 'staunchly nationalist with a very strong Sinn Fein influence', there were signs that through

the work of the Local Development Association, community relations were in some ways improving.

As the official stated, 'The reputation (and appearance) of Carrickmore as a Sinn Fein/PIRA stronghold belied the reality and that most people there were simply anxious to improve the quality of their lives. That the possibility of change exists is illustrated by the fact that at the meeting Seamus Kerr, the former Sinn Fein councillor, was keen on a plan to build a footpath to a group of houses inhabited by some of the few local protestants on the grounds that it would serve to integrate the protestant community into the town and give them the easy access "which they should have had years ago" to its facilities...', dated 20 March 1991.

CENT/1/15/20A 1986-1991 Dove House

File details the UK Government examination of funding for a community resource centre in an area of high economic and social deprivation, the Bogside in Derry~

Londonderry, which was primarily aimed at helping those needing legal advice, unemployed, elderly and young people.

The Dove House project was one of many which had been refused funding by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland amid concerns that the funding might benefit paramilitary activities.

In one letter, dated 17th October 1991 from the Private Secretary NIO to Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, it was conveyed to No. 10 Downing Street that they had received a request from a member of 'Dove House, Community Resource Centre, Bogside Derry for an autographed photograph of the Prime Minister for them to auction for fundraising purposes.'

Although the NIO was monitoring the continued funding of Dove House, the Private Secretary NIO noted that due to the concern that:

'availability of Government funds would give rise to a degree of risk that support for certain community groups would have the effect of improving the standing and furthering the aims of a paramilitary organisation, whether directly or indirectly. As a result of certain changes in the management of the Centre and of reassurances given locally, including Bishop Edward Daly, the funding to the group was reinstated in July 1986...the request for a signed

autograph seems, at face value, fairly straightforward, and officials here would see no immediate reason to refuse this request...’.

CENT/1/16/20A 1988-1992 Sinn Fein: Declaration on Non-violence

File contains the Sinn Fein discussion document ‘Towards a lasting Peace in Ireland’, published in February 1992, which has been annotated with comments by a Central Secretariat official, for example ‘failure to account for Unionist anxieties’, ‘failure to explain why British want to perpetuate partition’, etc.

CENT/1/17/18A 1987-1992 Irish Language Issues

File contains a paper from Jeremy Hanley, Under Secretary of State, NIO to the Secretary of State, dated 11 August 1992, recommending that the government accept Irish as falling within the Draft Charter of Regional Minority Languages, and setting out the benefits that would result by depoliticising the language.

CENT/1/20/19A 1991-1992 Information Strategy Group (ISG) Official and Political

File contains minutes of meeting of the group which comprised officials and RUC and Army representatives, reviewing the security situation, responses to City Centre bombing, political developments, prisons, etc.

There are also drafts of the ‘Themes to hurt PIRA’ document with comments, dated 7 January 1991, and a final draft dated 21 January 1991; and a confidential paper entitled ‘The Provisionals: An update on their public position’, assessing Sinn Fein’s public statements over recent weeks, dated January 1991. There are also separate papers on ‘Themes to hurt Sinn Fein’ and ‘Themes to hurt the Loyalist Paramilitary Organisations’, dated 12 January 1992.

CENT/3/22A

1991

Secretary of State's meetings

File contains briefings and notes for the record of meetings, including a meeting between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, accompanied by the Paymaster General, and Northern Catholic Bishops, mainly about the Catholic school system not performing to its full potential.



Department of Economic Development

DED/22/80A 1990 Amendment to FE(NI) Act 1989 – Consultation

File contains correspondence following consultation on the ongoing debate surrounding Fair Employment and the MacBride Principles, reflecting divided opinions on the issue of equality in the workforce and employment principles. Included are the views of the Ulster Unionist Party, various NI Conservative Associations, Councils and organisations such as Probation Board NI. One prevalent theme in the responses from those opposed to MacBride was the opinion that jobs should be allocated solely on the basis of merit and that the imposition of employment equality ‘quotas’ would further exacerbate the community divide in Northern Ireland.

DED/22/63A 1987-1989 The Fair Employment Trust

File contains further papers and correspondence on the MacBride Principles, setting out the UK Government position with regard to recommended changes to equality law in Northern Ireland, and redressing an imbalance, in what was perceived as discrimination against Roman Catholics in education, housing and employment. London had consistently opposed the campaign which they viewed less as a ‘genuine fair employment initiative’ but rather as an attempt not only to embarrass UK Government politically but to adversely affect the NI economy, dated 13 May 1987.

DETI/1/65 1992-1992 Army Act 1992

File contains legal and briefing papers which illustrate the merging of the Ulster Defence Regiment with the Royal Irish Rangers to form a new regular army unit, the Royal Irish Regiment. For years preceding this move, the activities of the UDR had been raised during the Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference and in political talks at the highest level as a point of contention and for the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland (and for the Dublin Government) as a ‘deal breaker’ or, in the parlance of the NIO, an ‘iceberg’ in the way of political progress in Northern Ireland.

One official reported all party support for the merger with the obvious exception of the DUP. The official reported that Ulster Unionist Ken Maginnis, a former UDR soldier during the early 1970s, had expressed public support 'after initial hesitation', dated 29 January 1992.

**DETI/1/60 1991-1992 Great Britain / Republic of Ireland / Northern Ireland
Gas Pipeline Department of Energy (ROI)
discussions**

File details the procurement of a new gas field for the Irish consumer market, sited near the existing Kinsale

field. The papers note the complexities not only in the financial aspects but the logistical problems in laying the proposed pipeline across heavily fished waters (by fleets from North Wales, Germany and France), a nearby MOD 'air to surface' weapons testing range and a variety of competing territorial water claims by various governments (the Crown Estates Commission was consulted to give advice on this latter point).



Department of Education

ED/13/2/1084 1991-1992 Curriculum Branch – Cross Curricular Activities

File deals with Government attempts to increase awareness of prejudice resolution and conflict mediation in Northern Ireland's schools, to foster mutual understanding and accept other cultural heritage. Officials noted with caution the need to avoid a prescriptive and 'active' involvement role for schools and teachers, as they viewed that, in the hands of inexperienced teachers, or mishandled somehow, the policy could do more harm than good.

**ED/13/2/1088 1991-1992 Youth Training Programme – 'Belfast Bytes'
Meetings of the Group of West Belfast Community
Leaders**

File focusses on the Belfast Action Team (BAT) and their work with the Department and the Belfast Education and Library Board, with a new incentivised scheme to lure young people away from criminality or other activities, to become involved in the newly developing sphere of information technology.

In the target area of Lower Falls, Belfast, the scheme which was initially called 'Bullets to Bytes', sought to develop young persons' social abilities, life skills and self-esteem and was to be based around youth drop-in centres.

One official noted with enthusiasm BAT's belief that young people were very keen (and thus easily lured) to be involved in new technology such as the production of videos or utilising computers for magazine and posters creation, but the same official drew the line at many young peoples' appetite for playing computer games, noting it was 'not to be fostered', dated 22nd January 1992.

**ED/13/2/900 1988 - 1992 Education Reform in Northern Ireland. The School
Curriculum. Position of Religious Education**

File contains correspondence, briefings and reports detailing Government reassessment of the spiritual and moral role of the church in educating young people, which the main churches in Northern Ireland saw as an attempt to wrest away the subject area from church involvement. In

responding to the four main churches concerns, Government insisted that 'the main tenets of our Christian faith would have an important contribution to make too many of our schools...'.
The following paragraph has been redrafted in pencil by an official, with the original opening sentence

'I do not anticipate any change in the present arrangements whereby the "inspecting and examining" of RE provision in schools is undertaken by the churches'

replaced by the suggested new line,

'The presence of an agreed programme of study should provide a broad benchmark against which the quality and quantity of each school's RE provision may be assessed,'
dated c.3 February 1992.



Department of Environment

ENV/8/1/116 1988-1992 Refugees Resettlement

File starts with the UK Government repatriation of families displaced by the Vietnam war (the 'Boat People'), which as previous file releases has shown, included a number of Vietnamese families settling in Northern Ireland (Craigavon, etc.). However, in later papers added to this file, the focus shifts to the refugees from former Yugoslavia.

UK Government had agreed in November 1992 to take 1000 former detainees from Bosnian holding camps (along with each person's immediate dependants), and by extension the administration in Northern Ireland (including the Central Secretariat, the Departments of Environment, Health, Education and Finance) had agreed that there were good reasons not only for Northern Ireland to become involved, but to go out of its way to try to get some refugees to come to Northern Ireland if they were willing to do so. They estimated that approximately 100 former detainees (and their dependants) could be accommodated.

ENV/10/1/23 1992 Laganside Conference / Concert Hall

File contains paper relating to the proposed development of a new Laganside Conference / Concert Hall, includes details relating to the funding requirements and Ministerial support for the project. There is a note for the record, dated 7th March 1991 of a meeting between the Secretary of State, Minister of State and Richard Needham MP and a deputation of Belfast City Councillors and officials about the Laganside development.

ENV/20/1/55A 1989-1992 Election posters

File contains details of Ministerial and official disquiet in relation to election posters remaining on display following recent elections and the introduction of new legislation to address the issue.



Department of Health and Social Services

HSS/13/48/29 1977-1992 Emergency Planning Branch Use of Royal Air Force (RAF) and Naval Helicopters for the Carriage of Patients in an Emergency

File is based primarily on a comprehensive report by the Regional Ambulance Officers Group, entitled 'Helicopters in NHS' which assessed the viability of using Royal Air Force helicopters in emergency (civilian, non-security) situations. Although nowadays a routine part of standard medical emergency response protocol, at that time the use of helicopters, particularly in the Northern Ireland security context, had not been tried before. The report goes into great detail listing a wide array of issues to consider for those without military training, such as the preparation of impromptu landing zones (and with the ongoing security situation in NI, this was a particularly complicating factor where helicopters were seen as a valid target), rotor wind disruption, fire hazards, the danger of civilians walking into the tail rotor, erratic movement of the helicopter, nearby hazards such as electricity pylons, etc. In one later piece of correspondence, an official noted (1990) that the use of helicopters would be necessary as part of a response plan for the swift evacuation of patients with a highly transmissible viral haemorrhagic fever.

HSS/13/49/18 1992 Abortion Policy in Northern Ireland

File covers the contentious, complex and emotive debate across Northern Ireland over the re-examination of potential changes to the Abortion Act 1967 and also that same debate simultaneously being held in the Republic of Ireland. Since Direct Rule in 1972, the UK Government had not wished to change the law 'unless it is likely to command broad support among the people of the Province...' dated February 1992.

HSS/13/48/33 1991-1992 Child Abuse/Working with Sex Offenders

File details Government guidance for a co-ordinated Northern Ireland approach to working with sex offenders, especially young offenders. This primarily

targeted adolescent boys aged 12-16 years, a demographic which in the opinion of expert practitioners such as NSPCC, were a critical area for which to focus group work and intervention. A key concern of Government was the need to deal with the major problem areas of the effective management of offenders in custody and especially juvenile offenders, through the combined approach of medical, psychiatric and psychological treatment (and a continuing post-custodial care) for those 'at risk' of offending or already confirmed as being an offender.



Northern Ireland Office

NIO/17/37 1992 Information Strategy Group (Ministerial)

File contains minutes of a meeting dated 15th December 1992 reflecting on the security situation, political development, and prison issues.

It also noted that the Ministry of Defence had decided not to offer any assistance to Peter Taylor for the new Panorama series entitled 'States of Terror'. There is also a paper on key security messages, dated 9th December 1991.

NIO/17/39 1992 Political Talks

File contains a revised briefing on Security and Devolution, produced for talks with the parties, dated 14th April 1992. It sets out the possible roles for a NI

Administration in relation to security. There are also memos expressing concerns by officials about devolving prison administration and common law to a local administration.



Policy Co-ordinating Committee

**PCC/1/21/6 1992 Policy Co-ordinating Committee Minutes –
25 September 1992**

File contains a paper on proposals for a corporate image for Northern Ireland. This includes a consultant's report on how to take this strategy forward to improve the image of NI. Concerns were expressed about the proposal to establish a new "Quango" to lead on this work.

**PCC/1/21/7 1992 Policy Co-ordinating Committee Minutes –
30 October 1992**

File contains a talks update reflecting on recent developments including an SDLP suggestion "for a split in civil policing and anti-terrorist work ... Irish were not enthusiastic – Mr Flynn said: "I don't even want to discuss it!". It also comments on the role of Sir Ninian Stephen as chair of the second strand of the Northern Ireland talks and recent engagements with local parties, "UUP were upbeat – believe a deal can be done; DUP clearly unhappy with UUP and not prepared to consider anything which might "drip feed a united Ireland".

