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FROM: R J ALSTON
US(POL)

7 August 1991

cc ✓ PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Thomas o/r - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr McNeill - B
Mr D J R Hill o/r - B
Mr Cooke - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mr Archer, RID - B
HMA, Dublin - B

cc Mr Hamilton

PS/PUS (L&B) - B

THE IRISH AND THE UNIONISTS

At the recent Anglo-Irish Diner you urged the Irish to think of ways in which to build up links to the unionist community as a necessary condition for real political progress. Mr Dorr asked in mock despair "but how?". At the time you concentrated on the theme of "mood music" and Mr Nally mused aloud that what you were really suggesting was a speech by the Taoiseach.

2. In practice there is a substantial agenda of things the Irish might do, if they were minded to make a serious attempt to build confidence among the unionist community. Moving from the general to the particular these might include:

- (a) "mood music" to emphasise the importance of the relationship;
- (b) re-emphasis - in the specific context of the Talks - that Dublin holds to Article 1 of the Agreement and acknowledges that Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution will need to be addressed;
- (c) acknowledgement that whilst a unitary State and the other New Ireland Forum options, may be retained as

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long-term aspirations, they are not the limits of the Irish agenda and that there is genuine willingness to explore more modest development of relationships;

- (d) public acknowledgement of the need to give continuing high priority to security co-operation in order to keep up with the terrorists;
- (e) greater readiness to speak out in the aftermath of major IRA atrocities, coupled with more recognition of what is being done by the security forces and Government to improve public confidence in security policy and operations;
- (f) more open recognition of the "72% problem" and active support for measures to break down ignorance and misunderstanding in the South about Northern Ireland;
- (g) more contact between Dublin travellers and members of the majority community, and more encouragement of members of the majority community to attend gatherings of various kinds in Dublin;
- (h) adopt a more positive posture on extradition.

3. Some of these ideas are relatively easy. Several are not, and one or two may prove to be downright impossible in Irish political terms (especially Fianna Fail ones). The list does however illustrate the range of options open, and may provide a quarry on which we can draw should Mr Dorr or others again ask questions in our hearing. Beyond this, it may be worth asking ourselves whether, in the context of preparing for the Autumn Summit, we want to flesh out the general proposition with some or all of these explicit examples, several of which reflect also policy objectives as our

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own. It can be argued that all of them are necessary steps towards achieving a positive result in the political talks process and that unless the Irish agenda can be brought to accommodate them the prospects of movement are in fact bleak. As set out above these are all signals or confidence building measures. None prejudice actual Irish negotiating positions, and all (subject to HMG's views) reflect attitudes expressed by opposition parties. They may be hard for the Taoiseach to stomach, but if he can not his chances of having anything on the Northern Ireland issue to show for his stewardship are small.

i Dublin

[signed]

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