

- 1. ~~NIGEL WICKS~~
- 2. PRIME MINISTER

I was talking to Tom King at a social function on Thursday night, and he is clearly fairly apprehensive about how things in the Province are likely to develop, and possibly deteriorate in the new year. I sense also that he is feeling a little vulnerable and isolated. The personal security tensions will probably get increasingly sharp, since already he is finding that hostile Protestant demonstrations are manifesting themselves at places where he visits, which means that advance information about his highly confidential forward movements is filtering out - possibly through the RUC.

It struck me, and Tom King confirmed this, that it might be helpful if some small, ad hoc committee was established, which brought together on a regular, fairly informal basis, Cabinet colleagues who knew and had served in Northern Ireland, e.g. Willie Whitelaw, Douglas Hurd, and perhaps one or two others who know the Province well. The idea would be for Tom to talk through, in a programmed and systematic way, some of the problems which he is confronting, or which he sees looming up. I think that something along these lines would be desirable; do you think this feasible or practicable?

MA

Will consider in the

MICHAEL ALISON  
20th December, 1985

New Year - we already have  
a N.I. committee - we could  
perhaps reconstitute the membership  
of that one