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THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, THE RT HON ROY MASON MP, TO DR IAN PAISLEY MP

DEAR MR PAISLEY

YOU WERE NOT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS YESTERDAY WHEN I MADE A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF THE THREATENED CIVIL DISRUPTION AND I THOUGHT THEREFORE THAT YOU WOULD WISH TO KNOW THAT THE OVERWHELMING VIEW OF MPS WAS THAT INTIMIDATION OR THE THREAT OF INTIMIDATION IS THE MOST EVIL ASPECT OF THE SITUATION.

THE UNANIMOUS VIEW OF ALL PARTIES WAS THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE MUST BE DONE TO PREVENT INTIMIDATION AND TO ALLOW FREE PASSAGE TO THOSE WHO WISH TO WORK. IT WAS ALSO PRESSED UPON ME FROM ALL SIDES THAT EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO PROTECT THOSE SUBJECT TO INTIMIDATION AND TO CONDEMN WITHOUT EQUIVOCATION THOSE OF YOUR SUPPORTERS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE.

AT OUR MEETING YESTERDAY YOU CLAIMED THAT ANY ACTION TAKEN TODAY WOULD BE ENTIRELY PASSIVE AND THAT YOU WOULD NOT SUPPORT VIOLENCE OR INTIMIDATION. INTIMIDATION HAS TAKEN PLACE. THE RUC HAS DONE AND IS DOING A FIRST CLASS JOB WITHIN THE LIMITS OF ITS MANPOWER TO PROTECT THE ORDINARY PEOPLE FROM THUGS AND "BULLYBOYS". I MUST EMPHASISE THAT THIS WILL CONTINUE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ALL BRANCHES OF THE SECURITY FORCES IF REQUIRED.

I NOW PUT IT TO YOU AGAIN: WILL YOU, AS LEADER OF THE UUAC, INSTRUCT YOUR SUPPORTERS TO CEASE THEIR DESPICABLE ATTEMPTS TO PREVENT ORDINARY PEOPLE FROM EARNING THEIR LIVING; AND WILL YOU PUBLICLY AND WITHOUT QUALIFICATION CONDEMN THOSE WHO, IN THE NAME OF THE UUAC, ARE USING INTIMIDATION AND STRONG-ARM TACTICS TO BOLSTER SUPPORT.

MY PRIORITY IS QUITE CLEAR: I WISH TO GET ON WITH THE JOB OF DEFEATING THE PROVISIONAL IRA. THE RUC, WHO HAVE BEEN HAVING MAREED SUCCESS IN THE PURSUIT AND CAPTURE OF THESE EVIL MEN ARE NOW BEING DIVERTED FROM THEIR TAKS BY THE ACTION OF YOU AND YOUR SUPPORTERS.

YOU ARE PLAYING THE IRA GAME AND YOU SHOULD REALISE IT.

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