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**Reference Code:** 2021/46/283

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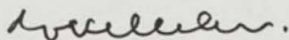
Meeting with Rev. John Dunlop, Belfast, 20 February 1992

John Dunlop is a Presbyterian Minister who combines a liberal manner with orthodox Unionist views. He is Moderator-elect of the Belfast Presbytery. I met him at his residence on 20 February. The following points of interest arose:

- he analysed the security situation in terms similar to those we have heard previously from Unionist sources: the Protestant community feel that the security system has failed them, and is too lax with paramilitaries. On Loyalist violence, he offered the view, which we have heard regularly, that the arrests and clear-out of informers from the UDA/UFF in the context of the Stevens Inquiry have facilitated the advent of a harder, younger and more ruthless UFF leadership.
- the Protestant community's defensive mentality, in his view, obstructed serious forward-looking thought by Unionists. That said, the siege mentality was deep-rooted and sincerely felt. He cited an incident which had a profound impact in his own middle-class Protestant North Belfast neighbourhood, involving a UDR man who lived several streets away. This individual, who had gone to great pains to keep his address secret, had been warned to leave his home by the Provisional IRA. The strong local view was that there were Provo moles in the Census Bureau.
- he believes that the Unionist community is confused and does not know how to react, particularly as

regards the security situation. His own view, and he believes that this is shared by thoughtful sections of Unionism, is that the reintroduction of internment would be a mistake. It would raise tensions, particularly in West Belfast and would invite international criticism, particularly from the United States:

- he is dismissive of what he described as the "first tier" of Unionist politicians i.e. James Molyneaux, Martin Smyth and John Taylor. He has more time for Ken Maginnis and has a high opinion of David Trimble. He is highly critical of Ian Paisley and the Free Presbyterian element in the DUP, and sees Peter Robinson and Sammy Wilson as the best of that party.
- he was interested in political developments in our jurisdiction and spoke approvingly of comments on Northern Ireland made by the Taoiseach and the Minister. (I drew his attention to the Minister's interview in the Irish News, which had appeared the same day).
- as regards the Anglo-Irish Agreement, he was amused by the line he had received from NIO officials at the time of signature, i.e., that it was "an honourable draw". He retorted to the NIO that, in soccer terms, "it was more like a 5-2 victory for Dublin". Dunlop pointed to two main difficulties he had with the Agreement: first, Article 1, in his view, should have been phrased, as he put it "more generously" to Unionists; second, he perceived the Agreement as instituting the Irish Government as the "official opposition" in Northern Ireland.



Declan Kelleher  
26 February, 1992