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AN RÚNAÍOCHT ANGLA-ÉIREANNACH

ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

BÉAL FEIRSTE

BELFAST

15

9 June 1993

Confidential

Mr Sean O hUiginn  
Assistant Secretary  
Anglo-Irish Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs

Dear Assistant Secretary

Conversation with Ian Paisley Junior

At the Dinner which followed the Tuesday's Conference on Northern Ireland and the Maastricht Treaty organised by the Jigsaw Group, on which I have reported separately, I found myself sitting, quite fortuitously beside Ian Paisley, junior. I had been introduced to Paisley earlier in the day as an official from the Department of Foreign Affairs, but from his relaxed manner in broaching the subject of the Secretariat, he had clearly established who I was (the attendance included quite a number of contacts of the Secretariat). He enquired whether I spent much time in Northern Ireland and, when I said yes, asked with a smile "are we talking Secretariat here?" He was affable and courteous throughout, despite much straight talking and divided his time roughly equally between talking to me and to Paul Bew, the pro-Unionist academic of the Cadogan Group, who was sitting on his other side.

General

Paisley has just finished year one of a two-year MA in politics at Queens. The second year will consist of work on a dissertation, on a subject yet to be selected. He thought it might be the impact of women on NI politics or alternatively the rise of, as he termed it, "my father's party". He is employed as a research assistant by his father. His wife works as a nurse in the Royal Victoria hospital. He showed himself to be quite well versed in 20th century Irish history but on several occasions demonstrated little familiarity with Southern politics and society of today.

As might be expected, he delivered a trenchant presentation of DUP views on the current situation. He denounced Articles 2 and 3, attacked Irish Government policy and declared that, for people like him Ireland was a "foreign country" because, above all it had a 'Catholic ethos'. He was scathing about British Government policy also. He declared himself "chuffed" (as was

the party) with the DUP's performance in the local Government elections. He recalled a public quote from Sir Patrick Mayhew which had forecast a decline in support for the DUP leading to its eventual disappearance. At the same time he admitted frankly that the DUP had considered it essential that the downward trend in their support from the high of the early '80s be halted. He declared the result as a vindication of the stance the party had taken at the talks last year.

### Participation in Talks

With regard to a possible resumption of talks he repeated the DUP line that they would not get involved in talks until Dublin had "dealt with" Articles 2 and 3. He expanded on this by suggesting that, for example, the Irish Government should announce that a referendum on Articles 2 and 3 would be held in, say, June 1994. He suggested that such a clear declaration could well oblige the DUP to get involved in a new round of political talks. He said "we wouldn't like it, but we would probably have to go in". He continued with the usual DUP line concerning Articles 2 and 3 and declaring that only after their removal could there be normal relations between the two parts of Ireland. Were a referendum to fail then the Unionists would have their worst fears confirmed. Paisley added that it was up to the Irish Government to use the intervening time before a referendum to seek to persuade the electorate on the issue.

### The UUP

Paisley stated that relations between his father and Jim Molyneaux remained extremely friendly and close. There had been some friction between the two parties in the run-up to the local elections but he felt that that was only to be expected in terms of party politics. The smaller party was always likely to fear being "squeezed". He spoke very highly of Molyneaux as a party leader and his trojan work in holding together the different personalities within the UUP. He thought that Molyneaux would go before too long and suggested that the choice of a successor could pose an interesting dilemma for the UUP. He speculated that they might appoint a figure-head leader, say, Jim Nicholson, with, in addition, a parliamentary leader at Westminster. This he thought would be bad for the UUP which would then come to resemble "nine different Unionist parties" at Westminster even more than was the case at present. With regard to the future leadership of the DUP, he described his father as a "young 67 year-old" and rejected any notion that he would step aside in the foreseeable future. He described himself as being "very close" to Peter Robinson.

### Loyalist paramilitaries

He added his voice to the others heard recently talking about a growing sense of alienation and frustration within the Loyalist community. He claimed that a major factor in what he called "damping down" sentiment among Unionists was the influence of his father and Jim Molyneaux. However, the problem of Loyalist paramilitaries was growing as could be seen by escalating violence from that quarter. Accordingly, he suggested that it was vital that some form of political deal be struck soon which would satisfy Unionist fears and concerns. He suggested that, were no such deal struck, violence would continue to escalate and "it could be another 25 years" before another opportunity presented itself.

### Views on a Settlement

His idea of a deal was a rehash of the DUP's suggestions for Strand One. He flatly rejected the notion of all-Ireland institutions with executive powers, though he did acknowledge that there would have to be some gesture towards the minority community in Northern Ireland. However, "Unionists will never accept Dublin interfering in their affairs". He claimed that DUP opposition to the power-sharing executive post Sunningdale had been based not on the power-sharing element but on the Council of Ireland dimension.

### Attitudes to Nationalist Political Parties

He felt that under the DUP suggestions in Strand One the SDLP would have done quite well. He criticised the Hume-Adams talks as merely political opportunism by John Hume in advance of the elections. He claimed there had been similar talks before previous elections. He made the interesting observation that, constitutional matters aside, the SDLP and the DUP had quite a lot in common in their approach to political matters. He suggested that, were he to go into one booth and an SDLP man to go into another booth and both write out twenty policies with regard to domestic politics, there would be considerable similarities in what they produced.

He was adamant that there could be no involvement by Sinn Fein in the Talks process until well after the Party had renounced violence. Even then, he said, "it would be ten or fifteen years after that before any Unionist would raise his head above the parapet to talk to Sinn Fein".

### Attitudes to Dublin

As might be expected, there was little in the way of light in his declarations with regard to the Irish Government or the

South in general. Though he acknowledged that there had been some change over the years, he averred that for Unionists the South was a foreign country, imbued with what he termed 'a Catholic ethos'. We discussed the Adelaide Hospital affair on which he was surprisingly ignorant though he put this down to the fact that there is very little interest taken in the North in what goes on in the South. He seemed surprised that the Adelaide decision had turned out as it had and did admit that, had it turned out otherwise it would have become just another stick for Unionists with which to beat the Dublin Government. He made the interesting observation (gloomily) that "we are very much alike and that makes it all the more difficult to reach a solution". He made the usual references to the scope for increased economic cooperation and expanded cross border trade in the context of a political settlement along the lines suggested by the DUP.

#### The Secretariat

In addition to denouncing the Secretariat vehemently and declaring that it would have to go, Paisley demonstrated some curiosity about life in the Secretariat. In subsequent conversation he voiced the opinion that last year's suspension of Conference meetings was seen by many Unionists as having wounded the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Secretariat. Not surprisingly, I reacted vigorously to this notion.

On parting, he said he had enjoyed the conversation between us. He added that, for him it was "off the record since nobody would believe that we would have been talking together".

Yours sincerely

*Wally Pendergast*  
ff Sean Farrell