

PIRA CEASEFIRE

Jr Hoops

Mr Lampton

To in file

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WMD 27/1/72

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NOTE OF A MEETING HELD AT 4.00 PM ON TUESDAY 21 JANUARY IN  
GREAT GEORGE'S STREET, LONDON SW1Present: Secretary of State  
Mr K J Jordan

Mr James Molyneaux MP

1. The ostensible purpose of the meeting, which had been called at the Secretary of State's request, was to enable the Secretary of State to brief Mr Molyneaux about recent developments affecting the PIRA ceasefire; the real purpose was through him to reassure Loyalist MPs, some of whom had been showing signs of discontent at the most recent developments involving talks with formerly proscribed organisations.

## THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION

2. The Secretary of State explained the Government's policy over the PIRA ceasefire and drew Mr Molyneaux's attention to the two Statements which he had issued last Sunday. The Secretary of State said that he believed the PIRA were at their lowest ebb but it would be quite wrong to think that they were defeated or could not mount further effective offensive actions. The Secretary of State had no intention of bartering batches of detainees to obtain temporary extensions of the ceasefire. The two tranches of releases since Christmas had not in fact released as many as would have been released if detainees had been appearing before the Commissioners on appeal. The PIRA's Statement listed 8 reasons why they felt it right not to extend the ceasefire - these were either completely false or had grotesquely exaggerated the nature and significance of certain events. The Secretary of State gave a detailed rebuttal of the PIRA's allegations. He stressed that there were no negotiations between the Government and the PIRA but, as explained in his Statement in the House last week, NIO officials were meeting representatives from a wide range of de-proscribed organisations, from both sides of the community, to learn their views and to explain Government policy. The authorities in the South were now taking more effective steps to harass the PIRA there. The British Government took steps to keep the Irish Government informed of policy and, for example, gave them similar advance notice of Statements to be made in the House as was given to the leaders of the various parties at Westminster.

3. Mr Molyneaux thanked the Secretary of State for his comprehensive briefing. He commented that it was better for NIO officials to talk directly to paramilitary organisations rather than to rely on third parties, which could be "dangerous". He said that although he was perfectly satisfied that the Secretary of State and his officials were not engaging in "negotiations" the UUUC would find it difficult to accept the distinction between "negotiations" and "explanations", particularly as time went on. Mr Molyneaux accepted that discussions with these organisations must by definition be rather drawn out but this could be



misinterpreted as constituting detailed negotiations. It might help to defuse the situation if meetings with paramilitary organisations could be placed on a regular and routine basis. Mr Molyneaux said that the Ulster Unionists had received indirect messages from the Dublin Government urging them "not to rock the boat" at this decisive stage.

#### RUMOURS ABOUT THE SITUATION

4. The Secretary of State said that there had been a plethora of totally unfounded rumours, which had been widely published in the press if indeed some of them have not originated in the media, about various aspects of the (sic) negotiations between the Government and the PIRA. There had also been many rumours about who was supposed to be playing the role of intermediaries in these "negotiations". He assured Mr Molyneaux that there was no truth whatsoever in the following canard: that the Prime Minister had intervened personally in the situation over the weekend, that the Cabinet had had major discussions on Northern Ireland policy that morning, that the Secretary of State had intended to release a further 60-100 detainees and had intended to withdraw two battalions from Northern Ireland.

5. Mr Molyneaux said that at a meeting on Monday of the ULCCC Dr Paisley had repeated the story of the Prime Minister's intervention and had also claimed that he had firm evidence that the GOC had tendered his resignation because of differences with the Secretary of State but had retracted after pressure from the MOD. Mr Molyneaux said he was well aware of how close the relations were in fact between the GOC and the Secretary of State.

#### STATUS OF MEMBERS OF THE CONVENTION

6. Mr Molyneaux said he was slightly worried about the impression which Captain Ardill seemed to have gathered from his recent meeting with the Secretary of State in Belfast. He was claiming that Members of the Convention would have "the same powers, privileges and rights of access to departments as had been enjoyed by Members of the Stormont Parliament and Assembly." Mr Molyneaux was particularly concerned about arrangements for referring matters to the Commissioner for Complaints in Northern Ireland, who had agreed that once the Assembly was prorogued, he would accept references from Westminster MPs. Mr Molyneaux was worried about the danger of crossed wires. The Secretary of State explained that what he had said to Captain Ardill was that although Members of the Convention were in no sense elected constituency representatives to a legislature, it was inconceivable that members of the public would not turn to them to seek help in redressing grievances. He had therefore instructed <sup>that</sup> representations from Convention Members should be handled as if they had come from Assemblymen.

#### GARDINER REPORT

7. Mr Molyneaux asked about the publication date. The Secretary of State said that he had not yet decided, although it would be quite soon. He undertook to inform Mr Molyneaux once a decision had been taken.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN FERMANAGH

8. The Secretary of State drew Mr Molyneaux's attention to the underrepresentation of the SELP on the sub-Committees of various

E.R.

District Councils, particularly Fermanagh, Armagh, Dungannon and Linavady. Mr Molyneaux accepted that the situation seemed unsatisfactory and offered to have a quiet word with Mr Harry West.

PUBLICITY

9. The Secretary of State said he thought it would be helpful if it became known that he had met Mr Molyneaux as leader of the Parliamentary Unionists. Mr Molyneaux was fully in agreement and said that he would issue a Statement which would stress the need for extremely responsible reporting by the media at this time and for the people of Northern Ireland to "keep their heads".

10. The meeting was extremely friendly throughout.

*K. J. Jordan*

-K J JORDAN  
22 January 1975

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