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Secretary

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21 JUN 1985

SECRETARY'S OFFICE ANNEX

MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND UNIONIST LEADERS ON 20 JUNE TO DISCUSS SECURITY 4.15 PM

Present: Secretary of State
Mr Scott
PUS
Mr Buxton
Mr Daniell

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DEPT OF ENVIRONMENT (N.I.)

Mr Molyneaux

Dr Paisley

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This joint meeting was called at the request of the two Unionist leaders.

2. Mr Molyneaux said that he and Dr Paisley had decided to seek the meeting in view of the dangerous situation in Northern Ireland arising out of:

- (i) the Government's ambiguity in dealing with Sinn Fein councillors;
- (ii) the stepping up of the terrorist campaign on the part of associates of these councillors;
- (iii) speculation about the Anglo-Irish talks.

On top of these factors was the new policy on banning traditional parades which was seen as the last straw by many loyalists. If this policy were pushed too far, there would be a major eruption of violence with confrontation between loyalists and the RUC and there would be no point in Unionist leaders advising people to stay calm. While Mr Molyneaux could see the reasoning behind some of what the Secretary of State's security advisers were trying to do, it was essential that they should act with more sensitivity.

3. Dr Paisley said that the policy on banning and rerouting marches would be the detonator that unleashed loyalist violence. It was incomprehensible that action should be taken against traditional loyalist marches that had followed the same route for decades or more, especially given that Hibernian marches had been allowed through loyalist and mixed areas, such as Rasharkin and Portglenone. The proposal to reroute a Craigavon/Portadown march away from the "Tunnel" was particularly serious. Dr Paisley despaired of the

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decision to operate extra Divisional Mobile Support Units to deal with a possible loyalist backlash against the Anglo-Irish talks; this was explosive. It appeared that the Government wanted to see loyalists on the wrong end of RUC batons in order to prove to the Irish that the security forces were impartial. The stage was being reached where there was no point in talking to the Secretary of State about security; Unionists would have to concentrate on using Parliament and the media to communicate. Indeed, was there any point in Loyalist politicians carrying on in public life?

3. The Secretary of State said that constitutional politicians would always be welcome to meet him to discuss security matters. He agreed with much of Mr Molyneaux' analysis of the situation but could not accept his conclusions. The Anglo-Irish talks were closely geared to the needs of the security situation, vitally important given that the Secretary of State had taken on the Unionists' point that security would not further improve substantially until something was done about the border. As for Sinn Fein's presence on District Councils, it would have been a mistake to proscribe them before the elections; if we had done so it would have been impossible to demonstrate that they constituted only a minority within the minority community. In its dealings with councillors and other elected representatives, the Government's policy was clear; it would distinguish to the maximum extent possible allowed by the law between those who believed in constitutionalism and those who connived in violence. On the level of violence, it was not the case that there had been some sudden upsurge. Since the beginning of the year 39 people had been killed, exactly the same number as in the same period last year; there had been 234 injuries compared to 284; fewer shooting incidents; and less use made of explosives. The pattern of killings had changed however in that more policemen had died, but fewer soldiers. The Secretary of State said that he would listen carefully to views on parades; the policy was to reduce the opportunity for mutual provocation and reduce the amount of RUC resources being diverted away from counter-terrorist activities to deal with marches. It was not possible to generalise on marches; each decision on rerouting would be taken on its merits by the RUC in the light of local conditions. Banning parades was a matter for the Secretary of State who took RUC

4. Mr Molyneaux said that in their dealings with Sinn Fein, Ministers and departments were acting in accordance with legal advice. Councils, however, were having to establish the position by means of test cases in the courts. For example, it was not clear in some cases whether Sinn Fein councillors could legally be excluded from nominations to certain Boards. There was a duty on Government to advise councillors, rather than expect them to risk putting themselves on the wrong side of the law. Perhaps DOE-NI could work more closely with Councils to give them support on this. Also, would the Government consider changing local government law in the light of the Sinn Fein threat? The Secretary of State said that it would be a mistake to rush into any changes in the law, rather it was his intention to keep the situation under review for a period to allow Councils the opportunity to settle down to their work. On the question of legal help for Councils, Mr Scott said that if Chief Executives spoke to DOE-NI they would no doubt receive advice where the law was clear cut; but where there was doubt the matter would have to be tested in the courts.

(Mr Barry to note and to advise please on whether anything further should be said to Mr Molyneaux about this.)

5. Mr Molyneaux cast doubt on whether the Anglo-Irish talks would contribute to better security. If the Irish were acting in good faith they would have done more to stop the flow of explosives while the talks were in progress. The Taoiseach ought now to be taking effective action to show his determination to deliver on his side of the agreement. Loyalists feared that a good deal would be conceded to the Irish with nothing being given in return in terms of enhanced security in border areas. The Secretary of State replied that there were many ways in which the Irish could help on the security front, in the field of explosives for example. They were already working with the UK on examining ways of producing fertilizer that was less easily converted to Home Made Explosives. There could be enormous benefit in devising a methodical arrangement for consultation with Dublin in which such matters could be pursued.

6. Dr Paisley said that if the cost of better security was to allow the South to get a toe in the door leading to Irish unity, then

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Unionists would not pay such a price. If they needed concessions in order to behave decently, that was not good enough. Successive British Governments had betrayed Northern Ireland and, with the Dublin element thrown in as well, an explosive situation was being created. It had in the past been stated by British Governments that the affairs of Northern Ireland were for the UK Parliament and the people of Northern Ireland to decide. Now it was being said that the government in the Republic had the right to represent the nationalist community in Northern Ireland; that was the toe in the door. Moreover the constitutional guarantee would be severely undermined if Dublin was to be involved in law-making in the North and if Judges from the Republic were to be involved in applying Northern Ireland's law. The Secretary of State said that there was no question of the Government in Dublin being given joint authority over Northern Ireland. If agreement was reached, then this would become clear. Mr Molyneaux doubted whether the Irish would agree to enhanced security co-operation unless HMG conceded more than was allowed for under the terms of the Chequers summit. Dr Paisley noted that the SDLP believed Northern Ireland to be a failed entity and could not be expected to help make the Province workable.

7. Mr Molyneaux disputed the argument that the policy on parades was designed to release RUC resources to deal with terrorism. Where parades were banned or rerouted, the police commitment had been shown to be greater than when they were allowed to proceed along traditional routes. It was monstrous that traditional parades should be rerouted because the character of the neighbourhood had changed (usually the result of unionist acceptance that land should be used for better housing for Catholics). The position in Craigavon/Portadown was a nonsense. The parade was being rerouted away from the "Tunnel" where there was a small Catholic presence to take it through much larger Catholic housing estates. This would be seen as a victory for Sinn Fein, one of whose councillors lived in the "Tunnel". Dr Paisley reported on an unsatisfactory meeting in RUC HQ where a senior police officer repeatedly lost his temper over discussion on an Apprentice Boys parade in Belfast and had to be restrained by a junior officer. Banning traditional parades would constitute an intolerable provocation of the Loyalist people and would result in serious confrontation. Mr Molyneaux said that he and

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Dr Paisley did not support new "coat trailing" parades clearly aimed at provocation; but the authorities should rethink their stance on traditional parades.

8. The Secretary of State re-iterated the point that decisions would be made on a case by case basis in the light of local circumstances; the way through all of this was for parade organisers to enter into constructive discussions with the local police. Mr Scott accepted that for the first time that a march was re-routed extra police resources might on some occasions be needed; but in subsequent years the policing requirement should be considerable reduced.

9. Dr Paisley referred to the Secretary of State's decision not to meet Mr Graham and the Reverend Foster as a part of a DUP deputation to discuss security. It was intolerable that they should be treated in the same way as members of Sinn Fein, who supported the killing of members of the security forces. The Secretary of State said that he had read very carefully the report of the Assembly debate on 19 June. Graham and Foster were clearly speaking in support of retaliatory killings outside the law; this was so alien to anything that the Secretary of State could contemplate that in the aftermath of such statements he could see no point in meeting them to discuss security. The Secretary of State accepted Dr Paisley's point that these people lived under enormous pressures, but pointed out that as leaders in the community they had a duty to behave responsibly. Mr Molyneaux said that all of this was an inevitable consequence of setting up an Assembly with no powers and no control over security. It was inevitable that in their frustration, members of such a body would give vent to their feelings in an extreme manner. As for whether he would meet the Reverend Foster later, as a member of the Assembly Security Committee, the Secretary of State said that he would consider the matter carefully.

10. As the meeting came to an end, Dr Paisley said that he had met successive Secretaries of State. The position was getting progressively worse. He would no longer talk to the Government about security; his next public statement would be stronger than anything said by Messrs Graham and Foster. It was irrelevant that

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Security statistics showed an improvement; the real point was the increasing bitterness of the man in the street. Ulster's constitutional position would be protected by the people of Ulster, not by any meaningless constitutional guarantee. Ulster was close to getting out of hand and Dr Paisley would not be surprised to see prominent Sinn Fein councillors being shot.

11. The Secretary of State said that he understood the words of anxiety and emotion which swept through the majority community from time to time, producing extreme statements. However during his period in Northern Ireland, he had been greatly encouraged by the number of ordinary people who continued to speak in constructive moderate tones. We have taken careful note of all that Mr Moynaux and Dr Paisley had said.

J. A. Daniell

J A DANIELL
Private Secretary

11 June 1985

cc PS/S of S (L&B) - ~
PS/Ministers (L&B) - ~
PS/PUS (L&B) - ~
Mr Bloomfield - ~
Mr Brennan
Mr Stephens - ~
Mr Barry (DOE-NI) - ~
Mr Chesterton
Mr Mcrifield - ~
Mr Gilliland - ~
Mr Ferneyhough - ~
Mr Buxton - ~
Mr G Hewitt - ~
Mr Coulson - ~
Mr Lyon
Mr Reeve - ~
Miss Elliott
Mr Bickham
Mr Wood

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