

FROM: J G GRAHAM

DATE: 18 August 1999

TO: MISS BEATTIE

FLYING OF UNION FLAG OVER GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

1. Further to Mr Mc Cusker's letter of 12 August I have spoken to Central Secretariat (Sam Fitzsimons in the absence of Terry Smith) in order to ascertain the latest position and what they would be content to have us divulge at this time.
2. As expected the matter is still under consideration and Sam suggested the following form of words:-

"Consideration is being given to the incidence of the flying of the Union flag on Government buildings in NI, however no final conclusions have yet been taken on this issue."

3. The attached draft reply draws on this form of words and makes the point, as you suggested, that the decision is not within CPG's remit.
4. Note, in relation to your other point, that flag flying is not based on statute (see letter of February 1999 from the Secretary of State to the First Minister (Designate) - tab **D**).
5. Although the draft reply is rather terse I do not think that we should expand on it. However if we propose to do so I have undertaken to clear the text with Sam Fitzsimons.



J G GRAHAM
CSERD

FILE NOTE

FLAG FLYING

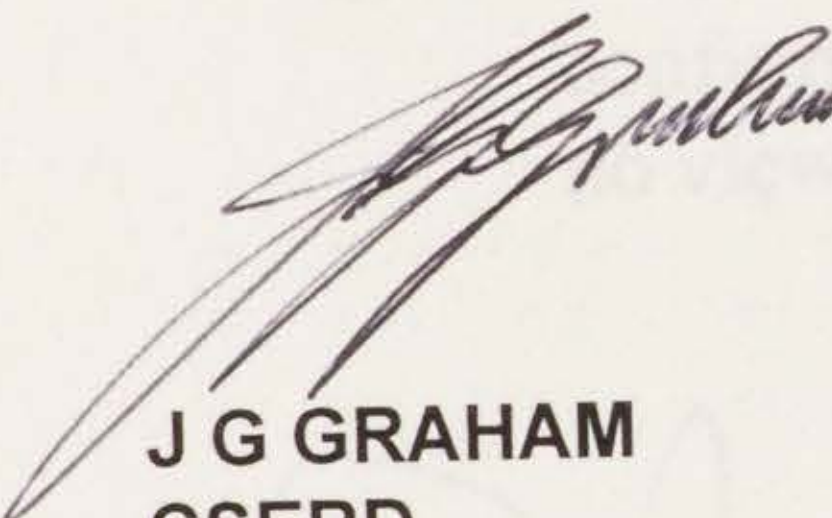
Terry Smyth (Cent Sec) phoned to give me an update.

The secretary of State has had a reply from Mr Mallon, indicating that he has no comment to make at this time. She has not had any response from Mr Trimble but, as she considers that he has had enough time to respond she proposes to go ahead (subject to the PM's views) and deschedule the additional 5 days.

She has been advised that any proposal to reduce the flag flying days below the GB norm would have to be cleared with the Palace and she is not intending to deschedule beyond the additional 5 days.

Once the PM has agreed Cent Sec will consider how to promulgate and announce the decision to deschedule.

Terry will keep me advised of developments

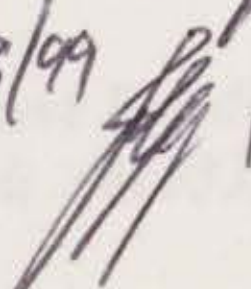

J G GRAHAM
CSERD
21 April 1999

NOTE.

Update to TS. Mr Trimble has now responded (and raised objections).
However S of S is still minded to go ahead and deschedule, but is awaiting response from number 10.
TS expects comment before 12 July - will let me know of developments.

 2/6/99

Note - in view of current political situation I have agreed further enquiries until 26/8/99

 16/7/99

THE NEW NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

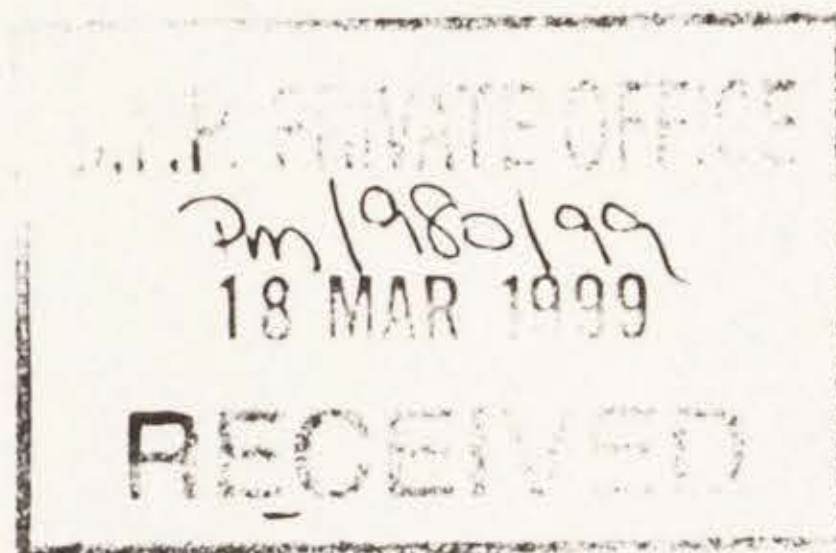
Office of the Deputy First Minister (Designate)

is better of
in Graham.

23.3

From: Billy Gamble
Private Secretary to the
Deputy First Minister (Designate)

12 March 1999



cc Mr Canell
Mr Hunter

PS/Secretary of State (B&L)

Adon
18/3/99

FLYING OF FLAGS/ROYAL GUN SALUTES

1. The Deputy First Minister (Designate) has asked me to thank the Secretary of State for her letter of 12 February.
2. Mr Mallon notes the intentions of the Secretary of State and I can confirm that the Deputy First Minister (Designate) has, at present, no views to offer on this subject.

Billy Gamble
BILLY GAMBLE

cc PS/Safs (B&L)
PS/Mr Murphy (OP, B&L)
PS/pus (B&L)
PS/Mr Sempster
Mr Watkins
Mr Ferguson
Mr Leach
Ms Schofield
Mr Macate
Mr Smyth
Mr Fitzsimons
Mr Webb

Lies Agus.

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Mr J McCusker
General Secretary
NIPSA
Harkin House
54 Wellington Park
BELFAST
BT9 6DP

11 March 1999

Dear Jim

FLYING OF UNION FLAG OVER GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Thank you for your letter of 4 March.

I am sorry that I am not yet in a position to provide a substantive reply. As you will appreciate, this is a sensitive matter and the issue is still under consideration by Ministers. However, I can assure you that I will give you a detailed response as soon as I am able to do so.

Yours sincerely

JH

JOHN HUNTER

*Mr Greaney
Thank you*

*SH
19.3*

YOUR REF

OUR REF

A/JMcC/CMcC

nipsa

The Leading Public Service Union

Jim McCusker General Secretary

Mr J Hunter
Director of Personnel
Central Personnel Group
Rosepark House
Upper Newtownards Road
BELFAST
BT4 3NR

Mr Angus
Thank you

4 March 1999

Dear John

On 30 November 1998 you wrote to me acknowledging my letters of 1 October 1998 and 10 November 1998 about the flying of the Union flag on government buildings. As 5 months have now elapsed since I first raised this issue formally with you, I would be grateful for a substantive reply to the proposal of our Civil Service Executive Committee.

Yours sincerely

Jim McCusker
General Secretary

Mr Graham has there been any movement since your note of 22/2? As 8/3/99
Miss Beattie
a draft reply please

Mrs Angus
To note Mr Graham's comments.
Draft response attached.

As 11/3

If not, will you draft another holding reply please.

Mr Hunter

Reply attached. Since I have indicated in the reply that the issue is being considered by Ministers. I do not think you need to speak to Jim McCusker. As 11/3

NORTHERN • IRELAND • PUBLIC • SERVICE • ALLIANCE

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FROM: J G GRAHAM

DATE: 10 March 1999

TO: MISS BEATTIE *ce*

FLYING OF FLAGS

1. A draft reply to Mr Mc Cusker, which has been cleared with Terry Smyth, Central Secretariat, is attached.
2. Although the S of S has written to the First and Deputy First Ministers (designate) to advise them of her intention to restrict flag flying (on NIO buildings) to the same days as in the rest of the UK they have not yet responded.
3. Terry Smith has suggested that, if Mr McCusker is pressing, Mr Hunter might have a word with him in confidence to explain the background.
4. Without in any way wishing to denigrate Mr McCusker I do not think that the present state of the correspondence is such as to justify the risk of an inadvertent leak of sensitive information, particularly at this delicate stage of the political process.



J G GRAHAM
CSERD