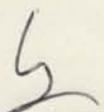


NOTE FOR THE RECORD

CHAIRMAN'S VISIT TO SECRETARY OF STATE - 7.30 PM, 29 AUGUST 1975

1. This meeting was arranged at short notice at my request. The Secretary of State asked if I preferred to see him alone. I replied that I would be very happy if Mr Jaynes (Deputy P.U.S.), who was present, would remain.
2. I informed the Secretary of State that we had been busy on negotiations which might possibly bear fruit with a solution which would not require either side to abandon principles. It would be a mistake to be over optimistic but things were by no means as bad as one would gather from the press. I explained in brief outline the kind of solution which was at present being looked at by the main groups of UUUC and SDLP. The Secretary of State expressed his gratification that the prospects were possibly a good deal better than they had seemed from the outside. He also hazarded the view that it might be advisable to continue to reserve security while the Army (which was a Westminster responsibility) continued to be present in strength. I replied that in the event of an agreed solution security policy would be one of the main unifying influences and that, with respect, it would be very foolish indeed to reserve security powers: these, in my opinion, ought to be transferred and I was sure that Army/police co-operation would be excellent when both organisations had a clear brief to put down terrorism. The Secretary of State expressed interest in this analysis and did not demur.
3. I then came to my main reason for seeking an interview, which was the gloomy outlook being put about concerning the Convention's chances: even if the report had to reflect a majority view, this was harmful, in my opinion, and all the more so while the chance of agreement existed. I asked the Secretary of State to take whatever steps he could within his Department and at Cabinet and Parliamentary level to remove the impression of despair. At the same time, I repeated, it would be wrong to give a glowing account of the prospects with the danger of subsequent disillusionment. He promised to do so but considered that the issue by him of a counteracting statement would not be helpful. I said that I agreed and did not intend to suggest a statement which, to judge from recent press and public reactions to official statements, would probably be disbelieved and would be regarded as mere counterpropaganda.
4. I commented, as a connected matter, on the transfer of political credibility from the politicians to the terrorists, a most unfortunate trend which many people, including Convention members, attributed largely to Government negotiation

6. There was some discussion of the US Presidential system. The SDLP said they were not particularly keen on it except as a means of getting the UUUC talking on other subjects. Their concept of it envisaged a provision for power sharing in the Executive. Mr Currie said this could be effected by electing the executive at large on a PR basis. Mr Hume was keen on the separation of executive and legislative areas of government for its own sake. Agreed to discuss this further.
7. It was noted that there would not be a quorum for the Business Committee on Tuesday, 2 September (SDLP members would be absent at funeral of former President de Valera). After consultation the Chairman agreed to postpone the meeting until Wednesday.
8. The delegates agreed to meet the Chairman again at 3 pm on Monday 1st.
9. The meeting lasted nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours and was relaxed and helpful throughout. At the end, the Chairman said he drew some satisfaction from (1) the evident and genuine search for agreement by both groups of negotiators; (2) their awareness of the pressures on the other side; (3) the willingness of SDLP not to insist that power-sharing be included in a statute provided adequate safeguards could be devised and (4) the willingness of the UUUC to search for a formula which would go some way towards providing such safeguards.

  
M N HAYES

1 September 1975