

NOTE FOR THE RECORDCHAIRMAN'S MEETING WITH DR PAISLEY - 9.40 AM, SATURDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1975

1. The meeting had been arranged as a result of a Friday evening telephone conversation between the Private Secretary and Dr Paisley. This followed on a message earlier in the day from Dr Paisley to the Private Secretary via Mr Beattie to the effect that:--
 - a. he was much aggrieved with Mr Napier's public "attack" on him accusing him of seeking to bring about a boycott rather than an adjournment of the Convention;
 - b. the warning that agreement on the proposals at present under discussion would bring about a fierce IRA onslaught.
2. Dr Paisley reiterated to the Chairman his grievance at Mr Napier for calling him irresponsible and implying that he was trying to wreck the Convention. He felt it wrong that one Leader should be attacking another Leader during the negotiations and commented that he was refraining from publicly retaliating. It was totally wrong to say that he was trying to wreck the Convention. He understood the great importance of making a report to Westminster which would be reasonable whether or not it would secure agreement or disagreement.
3. Dr Paisley wanted the Chairman to speak to Mr Napier and assure him that he was not a wrecker and that he was distressed at the attack. He was not seeking a public apology. On Monday next he would be proposing to his colleagues a token adjournment of one week which he hoped would have the approval of all parties.
4. The Chairman said that he was relieved to hear what Dr Paisley had to say and that, while he himself could not act as a go-between to obtain an apology, he would bring the matter up with Mr Napier while discussing other matters in the course of the coming days. He would put Dr Paisley's point of view to Mr Napier but wished to make it clear that it was strictly a matter between the two how things then developed.
5. The Chairman said that no doubt Mr Napier, like everyone else, was working under great pressure and that many other people, rightly or wrongly, had drawn the same conclusion which Mr Napier, according to Dr Paisley, had implied. Dr Paisley expressed his satisfaction with the Chairman's approach.
6. The Chairman went on to say that he was relieved to hear Dr Paisley's present views about the nature of an adjournment because, while it was not the Chairman's role to plan any form of protest or adjournment, he would have felt very much bound to do what he could to avoid an indefinite adjournment. There were, he said, a number of logical interpretations to Dr Paisley's latest statements:--
 - i. he intended to bring the present deliberations to an end;
 - ii. whatever his intentions, that would be the effect because, taken literally, his words meant that he favoured an adjournment until the Secretary of State's policy was radically changed and he was reported to have said that the Convention could not sit while people were being murdered by the IRA. This would mean that if an adjournment was indefinite there might be the greatest difficulty in credibly returning to the Convention so long as things continued

unchanged. This would then be playing into the hands of the IRA whose violence was the method of wrecking the Convention, to use their own words, and if many people had no confidence in the Secretary of State and, more particularly, some of his colleagues and advisers regarding their attitude to our Convention, this would be creating a situation where, by doing nothing, they could stop the Convention from functioning. If the Convention had not returned or completed its work by 7 November there would be a case for the UK giving up on the politicians as a bad job. In the meantime, if the IRA violence persisted, the Convention would ironically be accused of helping to prolong it because of the incentive they had to keep the Convention from operating.

7. Dr Paisley agreed with all this and stated that it made complete sense and was, of course, the strongest argument for making the adjournment short and defined. He said that such an action by the Convention for a week - especially if it were agreed all round - would make a good impression and would prevent the para-militaries from trying to seize the initiative, which he strongly wished to prevent.
8. The Chairman said that for Dr Paisley's sake and his own it would be unwise for the Chairman to plan or endorse any actions he prepared to take on Monday but clearly he would be taking soundings within his own coalition and elsewhere. Dr Paisley agreed and said that of course he did not wish to involve the Chairman in any planning sense. The Chairman would have to behave constitutionally towards the membership of the Convention.
9. He then came to the main question without prompting (something which the Chairman wished to discuss). He expressed the view that in the UUUC there was insuperable opposition to SDLP in the Cabinet. He said he was keen to get agreement and saw all the benefits of that but felt there was a danger of pinning hopes exclusively to one solution because, when that broke down, the parties would inevitably return to basic positions. He said that Mr Craig and Mr West were unrealistic in hoping to carry the coalition and the electorate.
10. The Chairman said he could see his point both as to the difficulty of getting agreement on a coalition scheme and as to the desirability of not giving up the search for an alternative. The Chairman thought that there were some people, not necessarily in the DUP, who need not be mentioned but who hoped for no agreement at all. Dr Paisley agreed and said that this was not his objective.
11. The Chairman then reminded him of his great personal influence and said that if he was for a scheme like the coalition he was certain Dr Paisley would carry it in the Convention and also later.
12. Dr Paisley repeated his own difficulty about having SDLP members in the Cabinet. The Chairman briefly repeated the arguments for SDLP proving their acceptability. Dr Paisley agreed with this in theory and said it would have been much more helpful if SDLP had shown the necessary attitudes at a very early stage. He agreed to go away and think of possible alternatives which would leave the SDLP in a creditable position with their electors. He mentioned that he was, in fact, seeing Mr Devlin during the week-end.
13. Before leaving Dr Paisley talked of the possibility of all the Leaders going to see the Secretary of State because of their hoped-for unanimity on the security front and thought that the Chairman might have a role to play. The Chairman said he appreciated the latter point but it was important that he and Dr Paisley should make no arrangements as to the Chairman's position. Dr Paisley readily agreed.

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- 14. The meeting was friendly and at 10.40 am the Chairman and Dr Paisley parted with expressions of mutual regard.

CHAIRMAN'S MEETING WITH DR PAISLEY - 9.40 AM, SATURDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 1975

M Williamson
M WILLIAMSON

M WILLIAMSON

8 September 1975

- The meeting had been arranged as a result of a Paisley evening telephone conversation with the Private Secretary and Dr Paisley. This followed on the day from Dr Paisley to the Private Secretary via Mr Beattie to the effect that:-
- he was much disturbed with Mr Napier's public "attack" on him accusing him to bring about a boycott rather than an adjournment of the Convention.
- the warning that agreement on the proposals at present under discussion would bring about a threat to the union.
- Dr Paisley reiterated to the Chairman his grievance at Mr Napier for calling him irresponsible and implying that he was trying to wreck the Convention. He felt it wrong that one leader should be attacking another leader during the negotiations and expressed that he was refraining from publicly retaliating. It was totally wrong to say that he was trying to wreck the Convention. He understood the great importance of making a report to Westminster which would be reasonable whether or not it would secure agreement or disagreement.
- Dr Paisley wanted the Chairman to speak to Mr Napier and assure him that he was not a wrecker and that he was distressed at the attack. He was not seeking a public apology. On Monday next he would be proposing to his colleagues a taken adjournment of one week which he hoped would have the approval of all parties.
- The Chairman said that he was relieved to hear what Dr Paisley had to say and that, while he himself could not act as a go-between to obtain an apology, he would bring the matter up with Mr Napier while discussing other matters in the course of the coming days. He would put Dr Paisley's point of view to Mr Napier and would make it clear that it was strictly a matter between the two men which then developed.
- The Chairman said that no doubt Mr Napier, like everyone else, was working under great pressure and that many other people, rightly or wrongly, had drawn the same conclusions which Mr Napier, according to Dr Paisley, had implied. Dr Paisley expressed his satisfaction with the Chairman's approach.
- The Chairman went on to say that he was relieved to hear Dr Paisley's present view about the whole of an adjournment because, while it was not the Chairman's role to plan any form of protest or adjournment, he would have felt very much bound to do what he could to avoid an indefinite adjournment. There were, he said, a number of logical interpretations to Dr Paisley's latest statement:-
 - he intended to bring the present deliberations to an end;
 - whatever his intentions, that would be the effect because, taken literally, his words meant that he favoured an adjournment until the Secretary of State's policy was sensibly changed and he was reported to have said that the Convention could not sit while people were in the streets. This would mean that if an adjournment were to be the greatest difficulty in bringing to the Convention so long as things continued