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From: Allen McVeigh
Political Affairs Division
18 September 1996

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L)
PS/Michael Ancram (DENI, B&L)
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L)
PS/Baroness Denton (DED)
PS/Lady Mayhew
PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Loughran, DED
Mr Thomas
Mr Legge
Mr Steele
Mr Leach
Mr Watkins
Mr Bell
Mr Wood
Mr Hill
Mr Stephens
Mr Perry
Mrs Collins
Mr Canavan, CCRU
Mr Gamble, DED
Mr Cornick
HMA Dublin

ASST SEC 20 SEP 1996
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Mr Maccabe/File

23/9 1. in left
Mr. [unclear]
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Mr. [unclear]
ASST SEC 23 SEP 1996
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PRESBYTERIAN MODERATOR'S SPEECH TO THE IRISH ASSOCIATION IN THE MANSION HOUSE, DUBLIN ON 17 SEPTEMBER

Please find attached for information the full text of the speech delivered yesterday to the Irish Association in Dublin by the Presbyterian Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Harry Allen, and which has been extensively reported in the media yesterday and today. It provides a useful overview of current thinking within the Presbyterian Church on present events: the latent sub-messages possibly suggests a hardening attitude developing from a growing sense, coming out from the hamlets and villages where they are in a minority, of Protestant alienation.

2. Incidentally, statements have also issued from the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church on boycotts and church pickets and have been reported, but nothing yet, as far as I am aware, has come from the Catholic Church; this has not gone unnoticed by the UKUP's

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Cedric Wilson, with regard to the boycotts issue, who has highlighted the fact for cheap political gain. There is a clear danger that tit for tat action will continue to spiral out of control, fuelled by recriminations, if messages from such as the Moderator go unheeded.

(Signed)

A McVEIGH

SH Ext 27089

KM/20222

**P.A.B.**

18 SEP 1996

PRESS RELEASE

Issued: 17-9-96

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1300HRS TUESDAY 17-09-96**MODERATOR EXPRESS POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE WHILE
RECOGNISING THE PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT.**

In a speech to be delivered today, Tuesday 17th September at 1.00pm in the Orchard Room of the Mansion House, Dublin, Presbyterian Moderator Dr Harry Allen will tell the Irish Association of his hopes for a future where people will be able to celebrate their culture without dissension and without triumphalism.

"I long to see people able to celebrate their culture without dissension and without triumphalism. I long to see people accept each other as fellow citizens of this land.....I long to see people recognise that every person born in this land or coming to its shores in search of hope and new life, can be recognised as a citizen without diminution of his or her status on grounds of religion or culture."

But while having these desires for the future Dr Allen will be expressing his views on the present situation and the difficulties to be overcome. "The Protestant feeling that far too many concessions were being made to Republican elements without any reciprocation.....led to the second stand off at Drumcree in July."

"The parades Issue raises the topic of CONSENT.....In reality it is saying that certain groups can 'own' certain streets or 'areas'.....This cannot be the case."

"BOYCOTTING has been excused as punishing those who manned the barricades during the Drumcree stand off, but the truth is that in small towns and villages where Protestants are in the minority, sinister forces are creating conditions where every Protestant business is being targeted. There is no selection, it is widespread. That of course leads to the counter threat of boycotting of Roman Catholic businesses. This must be ended immediately and every person - politician, clergyman, leader and neighbour must act to that end."

"The events of the weekendwhen Roman Catholic Churches were picketed may have been a result of frustration felt to the opposition to church parades.....Yet they are unjustified and unchristian as they are denying the religious liberty that those picketing are demanding.....The greater concern in places like Dunloy is that ordinary worshippers going to church on Sunday mornings are often subjected to abuse and taunts that make life most difficult and this matter should be dealt with by those in religious authority in these areas."

The Irish Association was founded in 1938 to help in the development of cultural, economic and social relations. It is a non-party and non-sectarian Association with the aim 'to make reason and goodwill take the place of passion and prejudice in Ireland, North and South.' The Association organises these lunchtime meetings regularly and invites prominent individuals to address a public audience that usually includes members of the Dail and Senate, the diplomatic services, the business community and the Associations members.

Following his speech Dr Allen will take questions from the floor and the event is expected to finish by 2.15pm., when Dr Allen will be available for interview.

Issued by Stephen Lynas, Presbyterian Information Services

The full text of Dr Allen's speech is attached

Information Department, Church House, Belfast BT1 6DW
Tel: 01232 322284 Fax: 01232 248377 Outside Office Hours: 01574 277325 Mobile: 0802 264354
e-mail: Info@PresbyterianIreland.org <http://www.PresbyterianIreland.org/>

EMBARGOED UNTIL 13.00hrs TUESDAY 17 09 96

ADDRESS TO THE IRISH ASSOCIATION: 17th September 1996 1.00pm

Mansion House, Dublin. Given by The Presbyterian Moderator.

Rt. Rev. Dr. D. H. Allen.

May I begin by thanking Mrs Barbara Fitzgerald and the Committee of the Irish Association for the invitation to be with you today and to share some of my feelings and aspirations, both as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and as a parish minister of over 35 years experience. I bring you the greetings of the General Assembly. Our membership it should be remembered stretches from Cork to Coleraine and from Dublin to Donegal, with over 304,000 members (8,700 living in Republic of Ireland)

As I gave thought to this address, I felt that it might be appropriate in traditional Presbyterian style to treat it under three points which are simple, unoriginal but useful to my purpose. The Past with its Pressures; The Present and its Problems and The Future and its Possibilities. I will however try to set the scene and then to concentrate on my hopes for the future in Ireland and leave some time for questions.

THE PAST AND ITS PRESSURES: One's understanding of the true course of Irish history is usually coloured by the textbooks we have used in school and the standpoint from which they were written.

Irish history viewed from different angles and by different cultures has had its lasting effect on our people. In many senses we are a driven people. Driven by our past and by the inner need to maintain all that it stands for. This pressure is not only on us, but also on all those who have emigrated over the years and who still view Ireland through rosy-tinted glasses.

I do not wish to spend time on specifics, but to note that in the North especially the Past brings pressure on the Roman Catholic/Nationalist community to achieve the ultimate goal of a United Ireland, and to use every means possible to do so. Equally on the Protestant/Unionist community rests the pressure to maintain the link with Great Britain at all costs.

In the recent past, tenuous moves were being made from both sides on political levels to reach some accommodation. The Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960's could and possible should have had a strong Protestant support, since many working class Protestant people were equally disenfranchised and subject to poor and scarce housing. When this did not happen, the republican element took control, the I.R.A. renewed its armed struggle and the rest is history.

It has often been suggested that a United Ireland was much closer just before the present troubles began, but that such a possibility has been put back by many years.

Another pressure from the past has been the tendency of people especially Roman Catholics to gather into ghetto areas. This may have been useful from the community point of view, but it left them wide open to the threat of intimidation from without by so-called loyalist elements and from within by extreme republican forces. To step out of line was and still is to be in danger of incurring the wrath of the god-fathers. This however can happen on the Protestant side when their areas are strictly segregated and their contact with the "other side" is limited.

In past years, whether local councils had the will to provide houses or not, they were often struggling with insufficient funds to provide housing for the ever-growing number of families. I know of many Protestant couples who could only get small flats because they had no children, but later found it almost impossible to get moved into larger housing regardless of the size of their families.

A further pressure that must be faced is the ease with which people can be categorised. For example, it is nearly always assumed that every Roman Catholic is or must be a Nationalist or a Republican. Certainly the influence of the moulding forces in those formative years of life make this almost true, but why should one be expected to believe in a United Ireland just because one is a Roman Catholic. There are quite a few who are neither nationalist or republican.

Equally it is presumed that every Protestant will vote unionist and will ardently stand for the link with Great Britain. The events of the past 25-30 years may have made that a greater reality, but there those who do not hold the link as unbreakable. People need space to be allowed to express their own valid views without intimidation of any kind.

These and many other pressures cast their long dark shadows from the past into our volatile present, and seek to impose their will on us.

THE PRESENT AND ITS PROBLEMS: I hardly know where to begin. We are constantly bombarded by the multiplicity of complex problems which threaten again and again to push us over the brink into utter despair and chaos from which there seems to be no return. Let us look at some of them:-

After what seemed an eternity of darkness we had the CEASEFIRES announced. It mattered not about the billions of pounds paid either in compensation or to reinstate damaged property or the thousands of lives brutally taken away. Now there was peace. That was all that mattered. But was it? There was talk about PEACE and Peace Processes, but all we really had were ceasefires and tenuous ones at that. There were still

the casualties. The families without members, the people without a future, the catalogue of missing persons, and I could go on..

Speaking about PEACE, it was great while it lasted. Renewed tourist trade, fuller orderbooks, more relaxed movement and travel, cross border contacts, even though the border was supposedly gone. Then with Canary Wharf it was all gone. The people who had tasted a little normality wanted more. They desired peace and said so, but all to no avail. There were those who expected and demanded that after long years of terrorist activity, things would suddenly change. In Ireland anyone knows that change takes time.

The ghettos are still with us. Integrated education is hailed as the panacea of our divided cultures. The sad truth is that people have lived peaceably together for years and would continue to do so if allowed to.

During the I.R.A. ceasefire we still had the intimidation, the punishment beatings, eviction orders, unacceptability of the police force etc. Since the breakdown the problems have escalated.

The Protestant feeling that far too many concessions were being made to Republican elements without any reciprocation. The fear that they were fast approaching a bridge too far, led to the second stand-off at Drumcree in July. Where the blame for the outcome really lies will be the subject of discussion and argument for years to come. What is known is that trust has been the victim. The appeal from the Orange leaders for accommodation, the intransigence of the Nationalist group, the return march, the accusation and counter accusation, the millions of pounds worth of destruction in the aftermath, the use of that event to trigger off other effects such as the boycotting. These must be known.

The parades issue raises the topic of CONSENT. This seems a simple affair, but in reality it is saying that certain groups can "own" certain streets and areas. This cannot be the case. In sensitive areas people can reach sensible decisions by mutual, mature discussion.

The spate of BOYCOTTING has been excused as punishing those who manned the barricades during the Drumcree stand-off, but the truth is that in small towns and villages where Protestants are in the minority, sinister forces are creating conditions where every Protestant in business is being targeted. There is no selection, it is widespread. That of course leads to the counter threat of the boycotting of Roman Catholic businesses. This must be ended immediately and every person...politician, clergyman, leader and neighbour must actively work to that end.

The events of the weekend in Bushmills and Ballymena when Roman Catholic churches were picketed may have been a result of the frustration felt about the opposition to church parades in places like Dunloy and Bellaghy. Yet they are unjustified and unchristian as they

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are denying the religious liberty that those picketing are demanding. The teachings of Jesus Christ may not be very popular to many but He did command us to Love our neighbour, to Love our enemy, to do good to those who despitefully use us.

The greater concern in places like Dunloy is that ordinary worshippers going to church on Sunday mornings are often subjected to abuse and taunts that make life most difficult and this matter should be seriously dealt with by those in religious authority in these areas.

Well I could go on about the PAST and the PRESENT, but I came to speak about my hopes for the future of Ireland. What of..

THE FUTURE AND ITS POSSIBILITIES? People keep asking me, "Do you see any signs of hope? I keep saying, "Friend, I am in the business of hope!" The Bible does not tell me that everything in the garden will be rosy, or that things here or elsewhere will improve or become perfect as time goes on. However there is clear understanding that people can live together peaceably. One can love a enemy without agreeing with his views or surrendering one's own.

There can and must be the understanding and acceptance that minority communities wherever they are should not be intimidated or made to feel unimportant. They must see themselves as a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

Variant political aspirations can be held without dissention. There are those who would love to see a Labour government of the U.K. for example, but they do not cease to uphold the state because for the present that is not the case. Similar views are held in the South, but subversive means are not used to change the government.

I believe that people should seek to make a larger input into the government and policing of Northern Ireland. If people are prepared to benefit from the state, then until such times as that state changes its form or direction by democratic means, everyone should give it their full support. There can be no place for abstentionism. Everyone regardless of political affiliation should be working for the good of the country and as they work shoulder to shoulder, they will find out just how much they have in common.

I long to see Citizenship a clear mark of the integrity of every person. I long to see people ceasing to be intimidated by the least little thing that can be used to separate. This will demand a willingness on the part of everyone to work at this task of making this land a home for all.

If I am not a good citizen, I am not a good neighbour. If I am not a good neighbour, I am not a good Christian. The sad aspect of all our troubles is that so many on both sides claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "He that is not with Me is against Me." Where do we stand? With Him or against Him?

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What does the future hold? I believe that it holds clear possibilities for true lasting PEACE. Ours is a small land with so much going for it. I believe that whether Ireland is united or remains as at present, we have all to learn to live and work in accommodation. We must seek God's will for this land and settle for nothing less. I believe that the vast majority of people both North and South would long to see that day.

I long to see people able to celebrate their culture without dissention and without triumphalism. I long to see people accept each other as fellow citizens of this land and out of an honest search of history to admit that this land belongs first of all to God, then to us. We are stewards entrusted with the care of it and one day we shall have to give an account of our stewardship.

I long to see people recognise that every person born in this land or coming to its shores in search of hope and new life, can be recognised as a citizen without any diminution of his or her status on ground of religion or culture. I believe that God is calling all of us to a fresh reappraisal of the challenges that face us and of our need of His power to meet them.

My prayer is that God will save Ireland North and South from further bloodshed and heartache, that He will teach us His plans for this land and that He will lead us to that harmony of people and acceptance of His will that shall lead to prosperity and hope for every new day.

Ladies and gentlemen, Thank you.