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FROM: D J WATKINS
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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

- CC: PS/SofS (B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Mates (DFP,B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Hanley (DENI,B&L) - B
- PS/PUS (B&L) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Ledlie - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Deverell - B
- Mr Cooke - B
- Mr Hill - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Marsh - B
- Mr Quinn - B
- Mr Rickard - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Mr Caine - B
- Mr Archer, RID - B
- HMA, Dublin - B

LUNCH WITH MR MALLON MP, 21 APRIL

1. Mr Fell and I had lunch with Mr Mallon on Wednesday, 21 April. This was the long-postponed fulfilment of an offer at the turn of the year to discuss aspects of Northern Ireland life whose essentially Unionist symbolism, argue nationalists such as Mr Mallon, is disagreeable. In the event, and unsurprisingly, the discussion turned on to wider matters.
2. The lunch began with an informal discussion of Parliamentary matters, focusing on the Maastricht Bill and the growth of dissension within the Conservative Party, as

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Mr Mallon perceived it. He went on, however, to explain how comfortable he felt in Westminster in particular and in London in general: he found the issues and procedures of the House fascinating and London as a whole entirely congenial. (I mentally contrasted this with differing reports about Eddie McGrady on the one hand and Austin Currie in the Dail on the other.)

3. The discussion then turned to the forthcoming district council elections. Mallon clearly foresaw little change here, particularly in terms of the share of the Unionist vote. Whereas there might be some change in the greater Belfast area, there would be little outside it where, in any case, the two Unionist parties had always been hard to distinguish (eg, UUP councillors being members of Free Presbyterian churches). Mallon dismissed the notion that the elections were any impediment to resumption of Talks.
4. Turning to the recent discussions between Hume and Adams, Mallon said that these generally commanded support in his area as did anything which would improve the prospects of dialogue involving all who had something to contribute. He thought nonetheless that Adams would be unlikely to prove capable of delivering the Provisionals: what might be possible was Adams detaching Sinn Fein from PIRA in the event of a comprehensive political settlement. This would leave a hard core on both sides to be mopped up - on which more anon.
5. This led on to a discussion of the general perception of security, particularly in South Armagh. Mallon reported that, in his view, PIRA had the will to fight on, not least on the basis that if the Provisionals were not losing, then they were winning. He saw no evidence that the security forces had learnt much about how to combat terrorism effectively, eg, they continued to discommode local law-abiding citizens by erecting ugly and massive

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installations aimed primarily if not solely at protecting security forces themselves and not at protecting the local population. They seemed to operate in isolation from civil government programmes and not be part of the vaunted holistic approach. Moreover, he was depressed that he could find no evidence that HMG was engaged in any serious longer-term thinking about new ways of defeating terrorism, eg, through radical changes in security policy and/or political development.

6. This brought Mallon naturally to his policing agenda. He bitterly regretted the absence of any form of community policing in South Armagh, instancing the impossibility of security forces protecting the movement of Post Office vans out of Newry, investigation of burglary, etc. Security policy continued in the same weary old way, with the erection of installations which represented the RUC and the Army protecting themselves and indeed their own backs (eg, three bases in Newry and now Cloghogue as well). He was also depressed at the continuing and continuous evidence of squabbles between the RUC and the Army over operational primacy which he had witnessed no later than the previous evening at an RUC base in Armagh when the RUC refused to allow him access to the Army whose installation he had wished to discuss.

7. All this was bad enough. But it could be remedied only by a return to community policing, which in turn would require a radical restructuring of the RUC, and he was depressed that HMG had seemed to dismiss this out of hand. He was opposed to complete operational independence of the police in any society, though he acknowledged that he would not argue for a return to the pre-1970 situation of Government control. In summary, the Government had to have powers to refuse the RUC permission to take certain proposed actions. Mallon then expounded his community police force(s) plus ~~28~~-county anti-terrorist unit thesis

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in familiar terms. He immediately recognised a number of problems. First, he had seen last November that the Irish were the first to run away from the idea. Second, he acknowledged that there was an issue over the control of the armed forces but he did not believe this was insuperable. This was because he believed that the Defence Secretary's responsibility for the Army, even though it was operating under the control of the Northern Ireland police (itself answerable to local institutions), would be fulfilled as part of a UK-Ireland structure which would render irrelevant the different levels of control over each arm of the various security forces. Third, although he did not believe that terrorism would evaporate overnight on the creation of new local institutions commanding widespread allegiance, he did believe that, particularly (only?) if his own security suggestions were adopted, terrorism would quickly melt away and would be encouraged offstage by the adoption of strong security measures. And if initially terrorists targetted, or otherwise sought to corrupt, new community forces, the community itself, with its new-found allegiance to local institutions, would close ranks and eject the terrorists.

8. Taxed on how the "Minister" responsible in new local institutions for security might relate to the RUC and how he might find it possible to endorse tough actions, Mallon recognised that there would be problems, not least in seeking SDLP candidates for the post, but believed that the confidence which a new-style police force would command would overcome these. (He also thought that Unionists would be foolish not to seek to ensure that the post was filled by a nationalist.) This brought us on to how Mallon might persuade Unionists of his agenda. In this part of the discussion, Mallon made clear that he was not wedded to his particular form of solution and that he did see variance on it as being possible. But he was insistent that his analysis - essentially founded on the

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necessity for new security structures to command allegiance at local level amongst all parts of the community - was crucial. He had been misquoted in the Dougal interview when he had been a great deal less prescriptive. He appeared, after discussion, to recognise that there might be merit in his putting emphasis on the analysis rather than on the prescription as a way of forwarding and progressing his agenda. But he was unclear as to what Unionist he could sensibly start with in the process of persuading them of the merits of his analysis. It was clear that he did not regard Maginnis as such nor, ruefully perhaps, Robinson.

9. The discussion then turned on to other matters of symbolism, including in particular Orange marches. These Mallon regarded as a major problem for many nationalist communities such as his own in Markethill. They were not just the 12 July but also earlier marches when orangemen paraded endlessly up and down the main street on Friday and Saturday evenings, corralling the unsympathetic local population and depriving, eg, local bars of business. And then there were band competitions, collections in pubs, etc, which greatly intimidated the local population. Could more not be done? We explained to Mallon the gradualist approach of the RUC and of the Community Relations Council which had borne fruit (and he undertook to have a word with Dr Hawthorne - in clear preference, interesting, to Dr Fitzduff). What he wanted, however, was a more energetic application by the RUC of their powers to re-route marches. We undertook to look with particular care at the problems at Markethill (I should be grateful if Mr Quinn and Mr Marsh could take this further).
10. Finally, Mallon expressed general regret and indeed bewilderment at the behaviour of QUB over fair employment and other issues of symbolism.

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Comment

11. Mallon was in good heart. He was very affable and lucid. It was clear that his solution on the security structures question was less important than acknowledgement of his analysis, and both Mr Fell and I concluded that he had accepted that he had a good deal more to do to persuade of the force of his analysis as a first step.

[Signed DJW]

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