

FROM: PS/SIR JOHN WHEELER
2 April 1996



PA - 525/92

~~Mr. Cross...~~

~~Mr. ...~~

Mr Steele - B

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- cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Brooke - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mrs Collins - B
Mr Canavan - B
Mr McKervill - B

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MEETING WITH DR PAISLEY

~~Mr ...~~ S. 5/4..

The Minister met with Dr Ian Paisley and Ian Paisley Junior on 1 April to discuss a number of security issues but particularly parades. You provided official support.

Personal Security

2. The Minister opened by asking Dr Paisley if he was happy with the level of personal security provided to him and his DUP colleagues. Dr Paisley said that he was happy with his arrangements. However he was, frankly, concerned about the arrangement for Mr Trimble by which a CPU officer was accompanied by an ordinary traffic driver. In Dr Paisley's view, if it was the Chief Constable's intention to extend this arrangement he would feel that it was unfair as it put both the principal and the CPU officer at risk. Dr Paisley poured out considerable invective directed towards the Chief Constable. Dr Paisley was particularly concerned that the RUC did not seem to take heed of the threat assessment of the Metropolitan police; he had compared and contrasted the RUC's reaction to that of the Mets. According to Dr Paisley the Chief Constable had attempted to persuade the Met and the French Police to drop his protection arrangements. The Minister said that he would pass on the information to his policing officials and he hoped that

Dr Paisley could liaise directly with the new DCC Ops if he had any problems in this area.

Security Assessment

3. The Minister gave an honest and open assessment of the security situation as he saw it; PIRA/Sinn Fein's ceasefire had been a tactical ploy there had been no ending of violence, punishment attacks and the attacks on Orange Halls had continued and PIRA's engineering department had developed its weaponry. In other words there had been no standing down of the terrorist gangs. However Dr Paisley should take heart in the fact that the Government had not done anything which was irreversible with its own security arrangements and had developed much of its capability. Dr Paisley raised the subject of weaknesses in RUC Special Branch and the Minister said that he hoped that any difficulties in strategic intelligence could soon be sorted out but the Chinook disaster had left a large gap.

Parades

4. Dr Paisley then, without prompting, moved to the subject of parades. He complained about the prejudice within the RUC, examples of this was that the Chief Constable had met residents of the Garvaghy Road but not the Orangemen and that the Belfast Committee for the Apprentice Boys had been called in by a junior RUC officer, shown a propaganda video which had been made by the Lower Ormeau concerned citizens and told that because of the damage which had been done to the RUC last year that they would never be allowed to march on the Ormeau Road again. However Dr Paisley indicated that he had accepted an invitation from Ronnie Flanagan (which had arrived late on the day) for a meeting with the Apprentice Boys yesterday evening.

5. Mr Steele asked if an early announcement would be helpful. Both Paisley's agreed that an early announcement whether for or against would demonstrate that the police were taking a firm decision on a decision other than how many people could be turned out. Dr Paisley indicated deep suspicions that civil servants were

meeting with PIRA and that one of the things which was being promised was banning the orange parades. The Minister gave an assurance that this was not the case.

6. Dr Paisley took on board the Ministers warnings that PIRA/Sinn Fein would attempt to draw the Orangemen into conflict and use any excuse they could to go back to violence and said that he would use his influence to 'still people's hearts and minds'. Dr Paisley believed that the salvation (which I think means compromise would be if the police allowed the church parades to go on). Ian Paisley Junior rather unhelpfully intervened to say that the Government and the RUC could not be neutral, they could not attempt to please all sides they had to make a choice for law and order or for those who disobeyed the law. Dr Paisley was emphatic that the Orangemen should not negotiate with Rice in response to a suggestion from Mr Steele that there might be some room for compromise, for example, each of the institutions to have one church parade per year. Dr Paisley surprisingly said that there might be some room for a compromise of this nature although the 12 July parade would have to be allowed as well. Dr Paisley said that he was all for clearly agreed ground rules; at Drumcree he had kept to his side of the bargain that it should be only local Orangemen and that there was no ban, the only person to break that agreement was Mr Trimble who was not from the local lodge.

Policing White Paper

7. The Minister outlined the fundamentals of the Policing White Paper and the slight changes which had been made; Dr Paisley and particularly Ian Paisley Junior were very supportive of early publication.

Decommissioning Bill

8. The Minister took the two Paisley's minds on timing of the Decommissioning Bill. Both were in favour of legislation before 10 June as a signal to PIRA that the decommissioning issue was not going away.

Summary

9. This was a meeting which played the right mood music and may have done something to convince Dr Paisley that HMG were concerned that the loyalist institutions were not used as a joop for PIRA's return to violence in Northern Ireland. There was a little bite on suggested compromises and the meeting was conducted in a very friendly manner. The political capital to be had from direct conflict with Sinn Fein infiltrated residents groups may prove to irresistible for Dr Paisley but this effort to convince him that more damage could be inflicted on Sinn Fein's plan to damage the RUC and loyalist institutions by a more subtle approach was worth a shot. ?

Signed

PAUL A JOHNSTON
PS/Sir John Wheeler

BB/MOFS/10855