

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

E.R.

PC 124/5

2140
1. Sir Swain
14/5 2. POL/2

55

cc Mr Carriff ✓

NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE REVEREND IAN PAISLEY MP
IN STORMONT CASTLE ON 14 MAY 1984

The Secretary of State had a meeting with Dr Paisley on 14 May to discuss political developments following the publication of the Forum Report. Mr Merifield, Mr Reeve and Mr Lyon were present.

the attached
Dr Paisley spoke to / document which he had prepared for publication following the meeting. His Party were determined to resist any intrigue, interference or surrender to Dublin. Any all-Ireland institution, or advisory structure on any matter, including agriculture, would be seen as infringing the constitutional basis of Northern Ireland. In that case there should be a referendum. The Government had itself decided there should be no changes without widespread community support. There was clearly no such support for joint institutions. If the British Government did not like the decisions of the people of Northern Ireland, they should make clear that they did not wish Northern Ireland any more to be part of the United Kingdom, and the people of Northern Ireland would face up to that.

Dr Paisley said that a climate of uncertainty had been created because of leaks to the press reported the weekend before last. As a result, the security situation was deteriorating. The IRA had taken comfort from the Forum Report and, because of the leaks knew that a question mark hung over the future of Northern Ireland. There were very serious days ahead. He emphasised his view that the Secretary of State should make a full statement as soon as possible to stabilise the situation.

Dr Paisley said that he believed that any discussions about the future should be held clearly in the context of Northern Ireland alone. He was committed to the Assembly only in as far as there was no Dublin dimension. If moves along these lines were made, he would abandon the Assembly. He hoped the Assembly Reports Committee might still be established, without the presence of the SDLP. He was content for the Committee to discuss the Official Unionist paper on administrative devolution "The Way Forward", although he believed it to be integrationist. He looked forward to receiving the Government's views on the DUP's paper on legislative devolution. He had no intention of joining any Executive, however constituted, which included representatives of the minority. If the Secretary of State were to seek to devolve departmental responsibilities to each of the parties under his ultimate authority all hell would be let loose. He would have no part in it, and the people of Northern Ireland would work to bring it down.

E.R.

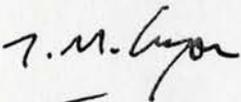
Dr Paisley said that he wished to see Northern Ireland developing separately from the Republic while maintaining good neighbourly relations. A United Ireland was a legitimate aspiration for Nationalists, but he could not be expected to do anything which might help them in that aim, and they should ideally recognise the separate identity of Northern Ireland and abandon their territorial claim to it. It would still be open to the Nationalists in the North to make what links they wished with Dublin, but that was not a matter for Government. Northern Ireland could, of course, co-operate with the Republic on matters of common interest on a departmental basis as they had done in the past, but it should be recognised that they were often in competition in such areas as agriculture and tourism.

Dr Paisley said that he thought the SDLP were in a very difficult position. They had no identity separate from Sinn Fein, and were therefore very vulnerable to the more extreme Party. He had not yet seen Mr Hume following the publication of the Forum Report, but thought he might see him in Strasbourg. If so, he would let him know how disappointed he had been by the Forum Report, particularly after Mr Hume had said there would be things in it for Unionists - there were not. Dr Paisley thought Mr Hume would be heavily pressed by Sinn Fein in the European elections. He thought Mr Hume might be more amenable to the Assembly and its Report Committee after the election. For his own part, he was working hard to build up the Unionist vote, which would reduce the impact of a rising Sinn Fein vote.

Dr Paisley said that he thought it was scandalous that the Forum Report had under-written the view that the minority community could not support the forces of law and order in Northern Ireland. He believed that many did in fact support the police, but he recognised that because of the problems of intimidation they were slow to give them information. The view that the UDR was a sectarian force was propaganda; and many Protestants felt the RUC were as hard on them as on anybody else. He wished that sensitive areas like West Belfast could receive the same sort of policing as any other area, including the presence of the UDR; but on balance recognised that for the time being the Army needed to stay in West Belfast in support of the police.

Dr Paisley said that he hoped the Secretary of State would shortly convene a conference of all the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland. Such a conference would at least make clear that the problems had to be dealt with in a Northern Ireland context alone.

The Secretary of State said that he would take note of and consider Dr Paisley's points about an early statement and round-table conference. At present, however, he doubted whether it was wise for him to say much more before the European Assembly elections had taken place. The press reports to which Dr Paisley had referred were not leaks. They were speculation, and some of it was exaggerated. There was no question of the Government acting dishonourably. The Government remained committed to the constitutional guarantee in the 1973 Act. But that did not necessarily mean that everything would stay the same. His objective remained of finding some way in which the communities could live at peace in Northern Ireland. He accepted that the solution had to be found within Northern Ireland, but some way had to be found to persuade the SDLP to play a part, and that required a change in attitude among Unionists. He was concerned about the long-term economic prospects of Northern Ireland, the strain on public expenditure and the unsatisfactory security situation. He wanted to find some way of restoring a degree of self government to the Province. There were many things which might involve cooperation with the Irish Republic which fell far short of affecting sovereignty. Sovereignty had in agriculture largely already been ceded to the European Community, and it was arguable that Northern Ireland would do better in agriculture if they made common cause with the Republic. If the Assembly Report Committee were set up without the presence of the SDLP, he would wish to consider its Report very carefully. But he still believed it would be necessary for the SDLP to play a part in Northern Ireland. On security, he believed that there were advantages in withdrawing the roulement batallion from West Belfast, although he recognised the considerable problems as well. He was not clear how much longer he himself would remain as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland: that was a matter for the Prime Minister.



J M LYON
Private Secretary

14th May 1984

CC PS/SOS (B&L) - M
PS/Ministers (B&L) - M
PS/PUS (B&L) - M
PS/Sir Ewart Bell
Mr Brennan - M
Mr Bourn
Mr Angel - M
Mr Merifield
Mr Doyne-Ditmas
Mr Abbott - M
Mr Boys Smith - M
Mr Reeve
Mr Wood - M
Mr Templeton
Mr Bickham - M

CONFIDENTIAL

The past weeks have seen a serious deterioration in the security situation in Northern Ireland and the political assault on the Unionist population has created a great deal of concern and disquiet. All those who are determined to avoid violent confrontation on the streets of Northern Ireland must closely examine their position and endeavour to do all that is possible to defuse the situation.

We believe that the present situation has been exacerbated by the attitude of the British Government to the Forum Report. Unionist see the ambivalent approach of the Northern Ireland Office and the Secretary of State as a confirmation of their worst fears, namely that the plot which was hatched in Dublin at the Summit meeting of December 1980, is continuing to be unfolded, its aim is to ease Northern Ireland into the Irish Republic. The leaks which have taken place over the last eight days as to how the Government intends to respond to the Irish Forum have very clearly added to the tension in the community.

We are of the opinion that these leaks are designed to test Unionist opinion and do reflect seriously the thinking of the Government in its response to the Republican Forum Report.

We see any attempt to foist all Ireland institutions, ^{structures or advisory bodies} upon the people of Northern Ireland and moves towards joint sovereignty or joint authority between Westminster and Dublin in Northern Ireland as a treachery greater than the treachery of the Sunningdale agreement and assure the Government that any proposals of this nature would bring about an even stranger reaction from Unionist than was evidenced against Sunningdale in 1974. There is no doubt in the minds of Unionist that such arrangements are stepping stones to full Dublin Rule. Proposals such as those mentioned in the media over the past week would represent a change in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland and as such would have to be put to the electorate in the form of a referendum. We demand that the terms of the Constitution Act be adhered to and any proposals be subject to the free choice of the people of Northern Ireland. We have no doubt what the outcome would be.

Secondly since any move towards all Ireland institutions and Joint Authority represent major constitutional changes we demand that they be subject to the same rigorous widespread consent criterion as is demanded by the Government for progress towards the devolution of powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

There must be no double standards applied. Unionists will not accept a veto on constitutional progress within Northern Ireland being placed in the hands of the minority community whilst the views of the majority are totally ignored in the response towards the demands of Republicans.

We issue a warning. Any attempts to please the Republican Parties whether North or South will fail if they fall short of granting total Irish Unification. Any setting out on the road to that goal will be further encouragement to the gunmen of the I.R.A. and most important such a course will bring the wrath of betrayed Unionists down upon the heads of those guilty of such perfidy.

The way forward must lie within the context of Northern Ireland. That is the democratically expressed wish of the people of Northern Ireland. The Government must reaffirm its commitment to this path alone. We believe that our document on legislative devolution forms the bases for the next step. If legislative powers were granted we believe that those parties presently boycotting the Assembly would come into the Assembly as progress towards full devolved powers was made. Further discussions within the Report Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly could take place as to the structures required for agreement on the devolution of further powers. We are hopeful that there are avenues of discussion open which will enable agreement to be reached but such discussions can only take place within the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Finally after a week in which we have seen a further lengthening of the list of deaths from terrorist violence in this province there must be a commitment to crush the murderers in our land. A demonstration that the political will to see this task through is needed. The population of this province have suffered long enough. They will not be patient for ever. There must be a realisation that the complacent security policies and ambivalent constitutional policies of the Government are considerably shortening the political views and bringing closer the day when Unionists will react against those who have caused them such adversity.