

R E S T R I C T E D

FROM: C G MACCABE
POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
19 June 1996

cc PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Leach (B&L) - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Hill - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mrs Collins - B
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Whysall - B
Ms Harrison - B
Mr Dickinson - B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B
Mr Cran - B
Mr Lamont, RID - B
Mr Budd, Cabinet Office
Mr Holmes, No 10
HMA, Dublin - B

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH THE DUP: 12 JUNE 1996: SWEETNESS AND LIGHT MAKES A COME-BACK

In his minute of 14 June, Mr Thomas asked me to make discreet enquiries about Councillor Alex Attwood's altercation with a member of Dr Paisley's protection team. I managed to have a quiet word with Mr Attwood in the margin of today's Plenary session.

2. Mr Attwood expressed surprise, but also satisfaction, that I had heard about the incident. His description of it was broadly similar to the description Dr Paisley gave to the Secretary of State: Mr Attwood and Councillor Alban Maginness (another senior SDLP member) tried to enter the Conference room by the door immediately behind where Dr Paisley was speaking, but their way was blocked by two protection officers who obstructed the entrance to prevent them going in. According to Mr Attwood they said their sole duty was to look after their principal and that was what they were

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

doing. Mr Attwood said he was philosophical, having had long personal experience of discourteous treatment by members of the RUC in his West Belfast constituency, but Mr Maginness - who has led a more sheltered life - was furious and was considering a formal complaint.

3. I told Mr Attwood I hoped he and Mr Maginness would think carefully before making a formal complaint about what seemed to me to be, at worst, an unfortunate excess of zeal by two members of the RUC. I said the Secretary of State, Michael Ancram and senior officials were also aware of the incident and that the role and location of protection officers within Castle Buildings would be examined. Mr Attwood said he was prepared to leave it there, and in the circumstances should not find it too hard to persuade Mr Maginness to do likewise. He appreciated that the police had a job to do, adding that the way they do it is crucial.

4. Subsequently I spoke to Peter Dickinson in the Talks Administration Unit who told me he had agreed with the RUC a couple of days ago that apart from two members of the Ministerial protection team, protection officers would not normally go on to the fifth (Conference Room) floor of Castle Buildings and would wait in a room specially provided on the third floor. I will pass this information on to Mr Attwood the next time I see him.

File Note

[signed CGM]

MEETING WITH THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMEN AND THE IRISH GOVERNMENT TEAM,
17 JUNE, 9.30AM

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SH EXT 27085

CP36391

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