

CONFIDENTIAL**10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA**

From the Private Secretary

10 June 1996

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Commenting on the new Paisley/McCartney alliance, Taylor said that McCartney had won the North Down by election because Paisley had not run a candidate. In the latest elections, there had been a DUP candidate and the UUP had topped the poll. This had made clear to McCartney that he could not remain MP for North Down without Paisley's support.

*Dear Sir,***10 JUNE TALKS: MEETING WITH UUP**

David Trimble and John Taylor had a short meeting with the Prime Minister before the start of the talks on 10 June. Sir Patrick Mayhew and Quentin Thomas were there on our side.

Trimble said that his meeting with Senator Mitchell had gone reasonably well but his concerns were not met. He continued to dislike the agenda for the plenary. He did not wish to discuss this substantively now but to warn us that he would raise this as a point of order at the beginning of the talks. It was for the participants to determine their procedures, not the two Governments. He did not wish to disrupt the statements of the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, but wanted a proper discussion of the identity, role and functions of the Chairman, as well as of the agenda. He did not have too much problem with the identity of the Chairman himself, although others did. What he wanted was a full consideration of the agenda. When he raised his point of order, he would be supported by Paisley and McCartney.

The Prime Minister said that he saw no need for a point of order to be raised. The two Governments had made a proposal on chairmanship but it was quite reasonable for the participants to want to discuss this. He had in mind to propose this himself after the introductory statements. It would be better to avoid a point of order, since this would only result in competitive points of order from others.

In discussion, it was agreed that Sir Patrick Mayhew should make this proposal right at the outset, before the Prime Minister and Taoiseach came into the meeting.

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The Prime Minister asked Trimble about his attitude to the alternative agenda produced by Paisley. Trimble said that he was aware of it and had not objected, but he did not regard it as serious. It was really a series of statements, not an agenda. His own main concern was that the Chairman should not have too much power. He believed that Senator Mitchell would be able to accept the kind of proposals he had in mind.

Commenting on the new Paisley/McCartney alliance, Taylor said that McCartney had won the North Down by election because Paisley had not run a candidate. In the latest elections, there had been a DUP candidate and the UUP had topped the poll. This had made clear to McCartney that he could not remain MP for North Down without Paisley's support.

Comment

This was a reasonable exchange, with little overt sign of the tension between Trimble and Taylor. The agreement on Sir Patrick Mayhew making an announcement on the agenda discussion before any points of order were raised later broke down, because Trimble did not believe Paisley would fail to intervene. He therefore wanted to be the first to speak. But the exchange, when it took place, was in reasonable terms.

I am copying this to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
John
JOHN HOLMES

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Northern Ireland Office

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