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**FROM: PS/Sir John Wheeler**  
**1 July 1996**

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 Thomas (B&L) - B  
 Mr Legge - B  
 Mr Watkins - B  
 Mr Bell - B  
 Mr Leach - B  
 Mr Ray - B  
 Mr Wood (B&L) - B  
 Mr Maccabe - B  
 Mr Stephens - B  
 Mr Hill (B&L) - B  
 Mr Perry - B  
 Mrs Collins - B  
 Mr Clarke - B  
 Ms McGimpsey - B

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 R4  
 Jm2/7.

Mr Steele - B

**MEETING WITH MR DAVID TRIMBLE: 29 JUNE 1996**

At the request of Mr Trimble a meeting was arranged on 29 June 1996 for him to speak to Sir John Wheeler the same day. The meeting took place at Stormont Castle.

2. Mr Trimble thanked the Minister for agreeing to see him at very short notice. He explained that he had held two meetings that day in order to discuss the forthcoming Garvaghy Road parade (scheduled for 7 July 1996): the first with the Portadown Orange Lodge; the second with DCC Flanagan. Following both meetings Mr Trimble was very worried that the security situation could deteriorate during the event and expressed his wish to avoid a situation in which PIRA could claim a reason to restart its terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland.

3. Mr Trimble felt that the Portadown Orange Lodge, privately, would not accept anything less than the compromise achieved last year: the local Lodge being allowed by the RUC to parade (out and back) along its usual route, with any other lodges which might

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attend being prevented from doing so. The Lodge would not, he felt, be prepared to compromise further as one of its key figures, Dennis Watson, had heard that the Irish Government was, through the the Anglo-Irish Secretariat, pressing for a re-routing of the parade; consequently, Watson was worried about such influence.

4. Mr Trimble had discussed the issue with DCC Flanagan following his meeting that morning with the Lodge. DCC Flanagan had indicated that he would like to re-route the parade, still allowing it to go along part of Garvaghy Road, but avoiding particular trouble spots. [Comment: the DCC had provided me with information following his meeting with Mr Trimble and prior to the Minister's meeting with him). Mr Trimble was now worried because he believed that the local Lodge would not accept a re-routing and that the situation would deteriorate as protests would escalate following such a decision. Mr Trimble's concern centred around his belief, based upon information provided by his contacts within the Orange Order, that other Orange groupings would be drawn to the area to protest (probably, in Mr Trimble's opinion, a total of 800-1000 people). He thought that Billy Wright (through his so-called mid-Ulster UVF grouping) would then use such a situation to cause trouble, thereby giving PIRA an excuse to restart its terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland. Given the structure of the Orange Order, it was entirely for local Orange groups to decide how to parade in their areas. The Reverend Martyn Smith could not, for example, order a lodge to re-route a parade. Therefore, it was entirely for the Portadown Lodge to decide which route it wished to follow on 7 July. Although the District Master in the area, Hal Gracey, wouldn't cause trouble, he 'wouldn't stick his neck out' to try to avoid such trouble.

5. The Minister thanked Mr Trimble for coming to see him in order to air his concerns, which had been noted. He reassured Mr Trimble that the RUC had full operational independence and would therefore police the event free from external pressure. However, having recently seen the topography of the area and having heard Mr

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Trimble's views, he agreed with Mr Trimble's assessment of the situation. Although the Minister had seen nothing to suggest that Billy Wright was likely to be involved, this seemed very plausible.

Signed

PAUL WILKINSON  
PS/Sir John Wheeler

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