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From: John McKervill
Talks Secretariat.
10 July 1996



cc PS/Secretary of State(L+B) -B
PS/Sir John Wheeler(L,B+DFP) -B
PS/Michael Ancram(L,B+DENI) -B
PS/Malcolm Moss(L,DOE+DHSS) -B
PS/Baroness Denton(L,DED+DANI) -B
PS/PUS(L+B) -B
PS/Sir David Fell -B
Mr Thomas(L+B) -B
Mr Bell -B
Mr Legge -B
Mr Leach(L+B) -B
Mr Steele -B
Mr Watkins -B
Mr Wood(L+B) -B
Mr Beeton -B
Mr Currie -B
Mr Hill(L+B) -B
Mr Lavery -B
Mr Maccabe -B
Mr Perry -B
Mr Stephens -B
Ms Checksfield -B
Miss Harrison(L+B) -B
Ms Mapstone -B
Mr Whysall(L+B) -B
Ms Collins, Cab Off (via IPL) -B
Mr O'Mahony, TAU -B
Mr Lamont, RID -B
HMA Dublin -B
Mr Westmacott, (via RID) -B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman -B
Mrs McNally(L+B) -B

File Note

TALKS: TUESDAY 9 JULY 1996

Summary

1. A day devoted to the consequences of Drumcree and the implications for continuation of the talks. The DUP and UKUP withdraw from the talks until the Drumcree situation is resolved. The UUP avoid language of withdrawal, saying they are unable to field a team. Behind the scenes they intimate that they wish to rejoin the talks as soon as possible. The majority of delegations argue for the talks to continue, at least in

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bilateral mode. Loyalists avoid the full session in order not to get caught up in Unionist grandstanding. They are keen to provide as calming an influence as possible. The Labour dog did not bark.

1. Before leaving Castle Buildings, the Secretary of State Detail with Gen de Chastelain and Mr Holkeri (Senator Mitchell was not available until 1040). All agreed that it was important

2. The day's proceedings began, following a pre-brief between the Secretary of State and officials, with a short meeting with David Ervine of the PUP. The Secretary of State began by welcoming Ervine's calming influence on the volatile circumstances surrounding Drumcree. He believed the key to the trouble, which had engulfed the Province the previous evening, was early resolution at Drumcree. Otherwise he foresaw violence stretching up to and through the twelfth. Agreeing, Ervine said that he feared that it was only a matter of time before someone was hit by a brick or shot, spiralling the violence. Emotion was the biggest factor. So far, he said, the paramilitaries as groupings had stayed out of becoming involved and he hoped to say something further later in the day to try to calm matters. it was time for the community to take responsibility. The Government

3. The Secretary of State ventured that there was a stage of theatre to be gone through. One suggestion, which he had floated with the UUP and DUP leaders the previous evening, for resolving the local Drumcree problem might be for the Garvaghy Road residents to declare their independence of Sinn Fein which might allow room for the Orange Order to engage with them. Rev M. Smyth, who had been at the meeting had agreed that certainly it would help. But the bottom line was that the Order would not talk to McKenna. Ervine doubted, however, whether the Residents would be prepared to enter dialogue without McKenna being present. He believed it was important that Trimble came out of the scene undamaged otherwise the winners would be Paisley and McCartney. For his part he was wondering whether to register the PUP's readiness to become involved in negotiation. He feared however that they would be unacceptable to the Orange Order. The

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meeting ended at this point in order to allow the Secretary of State to return to Stonnont Castle for a meeting with the Chief Constable at 1000.

4. Before leaving Castle Buildings, the Secretary of State called with Gen de Chastelain and Mr Holkeri (Senator Mitchell was not available until 1040). All agreed that it was important to continue with the talks, at least in bilaterals, in order not to let the message go out that the Unionists had brought an end to the negotiations. De Chastelain said he understood that Paisley was intending coming to Castle Buildings to read into the record a statement about his withdrawal from the talks pending resolution of Drumcree. It was agreed that the Chairmen would, if possible, resist any attempt for this to be in full session.

5. At 1130, Dr Alderdice joined Michael Ancram, who had arrived earlier from London, for a meeting. The Alliance leader was in particularly gloomy mood arguing that for years the British Government had felt it necessary to rescue Unionist leaders who had led Northern Ireland to the brink. Now, he suggested, it was time for the community to take responsibility. The Government should make clear to Unionist leaders the consequences of their actions; namely the end of the talks, if they chose not to attend - arguing that talks could not continue without a vital element which needed to be part of the decision making process - and the consequent end of the Forum.

6. Shortly after this meeting at midday Senator Mitchell, accompanied by the other Independent Chairmen, reported to Michael Ancram that they had taken soundings from the other delegations and the majority had favoured a full conferral session beginning at 1300 in order to discuss how to proceed in the light of developments surrounding Drumcree. Mitchell said that he proposed to invite all the delegations to express a view on how to proceed beginning, if acceptable, with statements by the two Governments. Michael Ancram agreed to speak first to get

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on the record the British Government's view before the expected withdrawal statements from the DUP and UKUP which would lay blame for the widespread violence at the door of the British and Irish Governments. They should be challenged by making clear the consequences of their absence from the talks is: the collapse of

7. Introducing the full conferral session at 1310 (despite some expectation, there was no public challenge from an element of the Labour ranks to Malachi Curran's position at the talks as an elected delegate) Senator Mitchell said that circumstances had changed since the schedule had been agreed the previous week and invited the views of delegates on how to proceed, beginning with the two Governments. Sadly, the Chairman's plan for a tour de table was thwarted by Rev McCrea who stated that he had been mandated to say formally and officially that the DUP were withdrawing from the talks until such time as the Drumcree issue had been resolved. Claiming that he was also speaking for the UUP, who were absent from the meeting (the two loyalist parties were also absent in order to avoid Unionist grandstanding and pressure for them also to withdraw) McCrea said that the situation had been brought about by the British Government, at the instigation of the Irish Government, to deny Unionists the right to walk down the Queens highway. His comments were echoed in more offensive terms by Cedric Wilson for the UKUP who claimed that his party could not sit and listen to the two Governments while Drumcree remained unresolved. He did not seek to explain, despite this claim, his party leader's and also Dr Paisley's readiness, later that day, to have a meeting with the Prime Minister! At this stage the two parties withdrew from the conference room.

10. Having heard the views of the delegations, the Chairman

8. Speaking for the British Government, Michael Ancram said the fantastic and unreal assertions of the DUP and UKUP merited no response and spoke in terms of the statement circulated by Mr Whysall yesterday, and which was immediately issued to the press. David Donoghue, the only Irish Government delegate present (Mervyn Taylor and other Irish officials arrived later in the afternoon), fully endorsed the British Government's view that

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the talks should continue. Alderdice repeated the apocalyptic assessment he had outlined to Michael Ancram earlier in the day and argued that it would be futile to carry on in the absence of Unionists. They should be challenged by making clear the consequences of their absence from the talks ie: the collapse of the talks and the Forum. Casey, for Labour, sought to lay the blame for the violence of the last two days at the door of both sides of the dispute and warned of more violence if the communities did not seek reconciliation. He felt, like Alderdice, that it was pointless to carry on with the talks at this time. Without the Unionists, no decisions or consensus could be achieved.

9. On the other hand, both May Blood for the NIWC and Sean Farren, SDLP, argued for continuation of the talks. Arguing that now was the time for politicians to show leadership, Ms Blood said that to pull down the shutters would send a dangerous signal to the community that the IRA had achieved a wonderful victory. Farren, who apologised for the absence of Seamus Mallon who had been prevented from attending (we later learned that loyalists had blocked his laneway) said, in a measured intervention, that he would not want to see precipitative action to give the impression that the talks were less than worthwhile. He recognised that the degree of progress had been limited, but there was a duty to give hope to the people of Northern Ireland that the politicians were attempting to build bridges. Consequently the SDLP delegation remained committed to the process and anxious to make progress.

10. Having heard the views of the delegations, the Chairman concluded that the talks should continue in bilateral format with the expectation that he would convene a meeting of the full group next week at a time to be agreed after further consultation with the delegations. It was also agreed that the Chairman, on behalf of the delegates, would issue a press statement to that effect. The meeting adjourned at 1350.

11. Immediately afterwards, Michael Ancram had a bilateral with the SDLP, led by Sean Farren. The Minister sought to reassure the SDLP that, despite the claims of McCrea, his view was that the UUP wished to re-engage in the talks and to pick up on the helpful progress they had made with the SDLP in the previous week. He told them that the UUP had been careful not to use the language of "withdrawal" stating that their absence from the full session was because they had been unable to field a team. Welcoming this reassurance, the SDLP team hoped that the UUP could be encouraged to field someone at Castle Buildings over the next few days of the talks, even on a "hit and run" basis in order to build on progress made, recognising that agreement between their party and the UUP was essential for any successful outcome of the talks.

12. Virtually the remainder of the meeting was given over to...

12. At 1430 the Minister next met the NIWC and thanked them for their support in keeping the talks going. He repeated his belief that Trimble was keen to keep the process going. It was clear, however, that the NIWC harboured doubts about Trimble's ability to bring his party with him, quoting the support which McCartney had received from UUP backbenchers at the Forum the previous day for what had been a most threatening and destructive speech. In response to a question from Sir David Fell, May Blood believed that there was an "all or nothing" mentality among loyalists at the moment which she hoped would translate eventually into a greater readiness to compromise as the consequences of loyalist actions became clearer. In that regard, the NIWC agreed with the Minister that statements from both Governments and parties highlighting the specific economic and social consequences of loyalist action would be helpful.

13. Following a security update from John Steele, at 1605 Michael Ancram held a meeting with Ken Maginnis, the only UUP representative to appear at Castle Buildings that day. Maginnis said he was fearful of the outcome, if the Drumcree situation remained unsolved until 11 July when loyalists would be "boozed". He believed a solution had to be found within the next

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twenty four hours. As for what that solution might be, he encouraged the Government to think in terms of some overall general policy statement on marches which entailed a right for both traditions and which involved the possible reappraisal of traditional local marches, dependent on demographic change. This general policy had however to be predicated on the general principle that no arterial route could be regarded as sectarian. As for the present standoff at Drumcree, he felt it could only be resolved by letting at least some of the local lodges down the road, perhaps without bands and the Union Jack, although he had no idea what would be acceptable to the local Order. (Mr Leach has submitted separately on Mr Maginnis' proposal for some form of general policy statement.)

14. Virtually the remainder of the meeting was given over to, by now, ritualistic abuse of the Chief Constable. His judgement had yet again been shown to be fundamentally flawed. But Maginnis' criticisms did not stop at the Chief Constable as he proceeded to demolish, one by one, the entire ACC rank of the RUC. Finally, turning to the talks, he reassured the Minister that the UUP were serious in making progress in the talks and would be back playing a full part as soon as possible. He took note of the Minister's view that a UUP presence in Castle Buildings over the next few days of the talks, particularly maintaining contact and building on the progress achieved with the SDLP, would be important.

15. The day was completed with a round up discussion with the Irish delegation, led by Minister Taylor. Michael Ancram gave them a summary of the day's proceedings, although he had not at that time had a readout of the Unionists' meeting(s) with the Prime Minister. A relatively happy Irish delegation (perhaps caused by the apparent distancing in the relationship between the British Government and Unionists) agreed that it was important to

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send out the message that the talks were continuing on, despite the absence of Unionists. They offered no ready solution to the Drumcree standoff.

(signed)

John McKervill
EXT 27088

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - 3
PS/Michael Ancrum (L&B) - 3
PS/Sir David Fell - 3
Mr Thomas - 3
Mr Leach - 3
Mr Ball - 3
Mrs Madden - 3
Mr Stephens - 3
Mr Boston - 3
Mr Lavery - 3
Mr Dickinson, TAU - 3
Mr Jones, F&D - 3
Miss Harrison - 3
Mr McKervill - 3
Mr Campbell-Sannerman - 3
Mr Clayton, HOLAS - 3
Mr Lavery - 3
HMA Dublin - 3

MR MILL - 2

TALES: FRATERNAL FALLING-OUT

FUS has seen Mr Dickinson's minute of today's date to you. On paragraph 4, FUS has commented, 'We have accredited delegates making lawful claims - there is no difficulty here.' But it would be prudent to hold further payments pending the resolution of this internal dispute within Labour.'

Signed

ANITA BRADUCCI
PRIVATE SECRETARY
10 JULY 1996

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