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ASSISTANT SEC**CPL**

FROM: WALTER R MYLES

Security Policy and Operations Branch
16 September 1996

cc PS/Secretary of State (B,L&T) - B
 PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
 PS/PUS (B&L) - B
 PS/Sir David Fell - B
 Mr Thomas - B
 Mr Steele, o/r - B
 Mr Watkins - B
 Mr Leach - B
 Mr Maccabe - B
 Mr Perry - B
 Mr Hill - B
 Mr Clarke
 Mr Margetts - B
 Mrs Todd - B
 Mr Maye - B
 Miss Meldrum
 Miss Hussain

1) DE
 2) Mrs McN
 186

PS/Michael Ancram (B,L&T) - B

GOVERNMENT MEETING WITH ALLIANCE PARTY

Speaking notes were requested for Michael Ancram to draw upon during a meeting with the Alliance Party.

2. The Minister may wish to have lines about the situation at Drumcree, rebutting claims by David Trimble of the British and Irish Governments interfering in RUC decision-making and reiterating the Chief Constable's independence.

Signed

WALTER R MYLES
 SHA Extn 27037

SPEAKING NOTES FOR MEETING WITH ALLIANCE PARTY

Events at Drumcree

- All operational decisions regarding the policing of parades in Northern Ireland are for the Chief Constable of the RUC to make. In deciding to re-route the parade in Portadown on 7 July the Chief Constable made a professional and impartial judgement about the parade based, quite properly, on his assessment of public order considerations.
- The Government supported fully the Chief Constable in this decision and in the subsequent decision to allow a limited parade to proceed along the Garvaghy Road. The Chief Constable has already made clear that there was no political interference with either decision and I am happy to reiterate that at no time did the British Government exert political pressure of any kind on the Chief Constable.
- Claims that the Irish Government, through Maryfield, have input into the decisions made by the Chief Constable are entirely without foundation. There is no political interference from either Government in the independence of the Chief Constable who alone is responsible for operational decisions.
- This Government remains convinced that the search for true and lasting peace and political stability is through democratic politics. We have encouraged all strands of political opinion to become involved in the multi-party talks process. It is not our intention that anyone be excluded and all those who espouse the principles of democracy and non-violence should participate fully in the negotiations.