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FROM P S WILKINSON
PS/SIR JOHN WHEELER
9 JULY 1996

[Faint, mostly illegible text from the original document]

- PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) -B
- PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) -B
- PS/PUS (L&B) -B
- PS/Sir David Fell -B
- Mr Legge o/r -B
- Mr Steele -B
- Mr Watkins -B
- Mr Bell -B
- Mr Leach -B
- Mr Ray -B
- Mr Wood (L&B) -B
- Mr Maccabe -B
- Mr Perry -B
- Mr Stephens -B
- Mrs Collins -B
- Mr Hill -B
- Mr Clarke -B
- Mr Margetts -B
- Mr Holmes, No 10 -B

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

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION: SIR JOHN WHEELER/KEN MAGINNIS

Mr Ken Maginnis MP telephoned the Minister today to talk about the situation at Drumcree.

2. Mr Maginnis had two things to discuss. Firstly, he had heard that a senior police officer had allegedly told the Rt Hon John Taylor MP that, as the RUC were stretched, the Army would be deployed in order to disperse the crowd at Drumcree. Mr Maginnis felt that the consequence of such a development would be that 'Ulster would burn' and sought reassurance from Sir John that the Army would not be used in this way. The Minister replied that although the RUC's operational capability had to be reinforced by the Army, he knew of no plan to disperse the 5000 Orangemen currently gathered at Drumcree. The Minister said that the key to resolving the problem was for an accommodation to be reached between the district Orange Order and the nationalist community at Drumcree. Such an accommodation could only be reached by local negotiation between the groups concerned.

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3. Mr Maginnis went on to say that, in his personal opinion, the Chief Constable had made the wrong decision (ie to re-route the march) and that he ought to be 'stood down'. Although Mr Maginnis was friendly with the DCC (Ops), Ronnie Flanagan, he thought that the DCC(Ops) had demonstrated his lack of operational experience during his handling of the situation; this was, perhaps, a reflection of his unpreparedness to take over as Chief Constable from Sir Hugh.

DRUMCREE MARCH

Signed:

P S WILKINSON
PS/SIR JOHN WHEELER
9 JULY 1996

with Paddy Mayhew at lunchtime. I asked Trimble if Paddy Trimble was not keen, but agreed to do so. The meeting took place this evening, involving Trimble, Paisley and Smyth.

The meeting was long, reasonably friendly, but inconclusive. The Unionist leaders appeared shaken by the circumstances they found themselves in, and did not rise and leave. They argued that serious trouble lay ahead if a solution was not found by Friday. But they did not seem inclined to show leadership themselves to avert this.

They complained about police behaviour, said that they wanted a period of calm to allow the two sides to come together, but had no proposals to offer other than to press for the RUC to let the march through. On a specific point, they said they were unable to persuade the Parades Organisers to talk to the Carvaghy Road Residents Association, because the latter were led by an ex-terrorist, Brendan Mackenna.

Paddy Mayhew listened to what they had to say, but made clear that he fully supported the RUC. He also tried to get across that the situation the Unionists found themselves in was not of their own making. He nevertheless arranged a meeting between the three and the RUC Deputy Chief

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