

LINE TO TAKE

MEETING WITH ULSTER UNIONIST PARTIES

The Prime Minister met the leaders of the Ulster Unionist Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, and the UK Unionist Party as well as the Grand Master of the Orange Lodge this afternoon to discuss recent developments in Portadown. It was a useful and constructive meeting. The Prime Minister made clear that the Chief Constable of the RUC had his full support in exercising his responsibilities on the ground, and in his decisions.

The Prime Minister appealed to all those at the meeting for maximum restraint in the present difficult situation, and made clear that there was no justification for the recent violence and disorder on the streets of Northern Ireland. The need now was to work for an accommodation between the local communities in Portadown which would respect the sensitivities of both and resolved the present stand-off. The Government is ready to play its part in achieving this.

MC

9 JULY 1996