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FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
8 MAY 1997

*File
John 9/5.*

*C: JP
PB
Press*

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Murphy (L&B)
PS/Mr Ingram (L&B)
PS/Mr Worthington (L, DENI
& DHSS)

PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Steele
Mr Thomas
Mr Stephens
Mr Bell
Mr Leach
Mr Watkins
Mr Brooker
Mr Maccabe
Mr Lavery
Mr Warner
Mr Holmes

Mr Hill

MEETING WITH DR I R K PAISLEY: 7 MAY 1997

The Secretary of State, accompanied by Mr Murphy, Mr Ingram and Mr Thomas met Dr Paisley yesterday evening in the fourth of her meetings with Northern Ireland Party leaders. It was a friendly meeting with Dr Paisley taking a reasonably constructive tone throughout. He covered a range of Northern Ireland issues, including education, health, agriculture and policing. He offered a copy of his speaking notes as an aide memoir and these are attached for information. Covered below are additional comments which he made.

2. Dr Paisley had just come from what he described as a very good meeting on BSE with Mr Rooker in MAFF. Dr Paisley reported that he, John Hume and Jim Nicholson had a very good working relationship with Commissioner Bonino and hoped she would visit Northern Ireland at the

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end of June. He hoped that the Northern Ireland Office would treat her well on this visit. It was agreed that Dr Paisley would contact Lord Dubs to arrange a more detailed discussion on BSE and agriculture matters generally.

3. On confidence building measures and particularly policing, Dr Paisley said it was insensitive of the Secretary of State to talk about the reform of policing. Instead, she should speak of the need to fight terrorism. He was sure that there was going to be a serious escalation of violence in Northern Ireland and was coming round to the view that a ceasefire was becoming less likely. The Secretary of State said that reform of the RUC was shorthand for the Police Bill, which had been sent to parties and had attracted no opposition. She accepted that the shorthand was not helpful and that there was some misunderstanding in the RUC. It may be necessary for her to do something to clarify this.

4. Asked what confidence building measures Dr Paisley envisaged, he said that quangos were a case in point. He was not against quangos per se but the fact that they were filled with unelectable people who had lost elections - but this of course did not include DUP supporters. He also mentioned the Parades Commission, the membership of which he described as "most unfair". Until there was fair representation on the Committee they should not be given any further powers.

5. The Secretary of State said she was not sure what confidence building measures the DUP or Unionists generally would ask for - she guessed it would be for the status quo. Dr Paisley offered to prepare a paper on CBM's for Unionists. At present CBM's were seen as concessions to Republicans - perception in Northern Ireland was everything. He hoped that the new team in the Northern Ireland Office would keep in touch with elected representatives and let them know what

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was in their mind. The previous Secretary of State had favourites - he claimed that David Trimble was seen every Thursday after Cabinet.

6. On actual parades, Dr Paisley recounted the situation at Dunloy, how the agreement with local people had fallen through and had caused the protests at Harryville. He also said that there was a virtual agreement at Drumcree last year with Councillor Ignatius Fox, but then the "ecumenical clergy" came in, the Jesuits said they could get more and the whole thing fell apart with serious consequences. The Secretary of State said that, central to the government's policy was the right to march and it was quite conceivable that the Commission would, after consideration, take the view that a march should go ahead, just as it could take the opposite view. Clearly, the best way was to get local agreement.

7. Moving on to education, health and training cuts which he said were imposed to help security, Dr Paisley said that the Police Authority had told him they had got nothing extra. On education, he said he would get Oliver Gibson to prepare a paper on how best to improve spending, particularly by the Boards. He suggested that the Boards needed direction on what the money was for - in his view it should be for more teachers, as a lot of experienced teachers were trying to get out of the profession. He also thought that there should be scrutiny of the Department of Education itself because they were often in the position of saying "physician heal thyself". The same applied to the Health Service.

8. The Secretary of State thanked Dr Paisley for coming, assured him that she looked forward to having regular meetings with him and other party leaders and hoped for a constructive time ahead.

Ken Lindsay

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