

FROM: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY  
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cc JPo  
DUP



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*Dear John*

**NORTHERN IRELAND: MEETINGS WITH MR ROBERT McCARTNEY QC  
MP AND LORD ALDERDICE**

We understand that the Prime Minister is to meet Mr Robert McCartney QC MP of the United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP) and Lord (John) Alderdice, Leader of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland on Monday 19 May 1997 at 2 pm and 4.30 pm respectively. The Secretary of State and an NIO official will be present.

These are, like the earlier meetings, intended as introductory encounters. The objectives are the same as before:

- **communicate Government's and PM's personal commitment to search for fair political accommodation and lasting peace in Northern Ireland**
- **provide reassurance to parties about key bases of policy - see below**
- **reiterate Government's desire to proceed with fullest co-operation, establish basis for trust and confidence and openness, for future**

Lord Alderdice is likely to be well-disposed, and may be constructive; though he has long been pessimistic about the talks process. Mr McCartney is firmly persuaded that the talks process is corrupt, indeed designed to appease Sinn Fein and ease Northern Ireland toward unification with the Republic. He may accept that these are not the Prime Minister's personal motivations; but he is unlikely to accept that the process is redeemable. He is, however, short on positive alternatives. It will be interesting to see how far their respective pessimism and suspicion have been countered by the Prime Minister's speech.

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At Annex A are some general points for the Prime Minister to make and attached at Annex B, particular points aimed at the individual parties. Annex C embodies background notes on the UKUP and Alliance, together with personality notes on Mr McCartney and Lord Alderdice.

W K LINDSAY

*(Advance copy; not yet  
cleared by Secretary of State)*

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