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FROM: ALAN SMYTH
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cc see attached list

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH THE UUP ON 6 JANUARY 1998

The UUP delegation arrived in good spirits with the exception of the stoney-faced Ken Maginnis who joined his party colleagues 10 minutes after their arrival. **David Trimble** reported that he had had a useful meeting with the Prime Minister but said that it would be helpful if the Secretary of State could let them know about anything which had emerged from other discussions which she had held earlier that day and on the Monday.

The Secretary of State confirmed that the overwhelming message coming from all the other parties was that they collectively saw an urgent need to move the process on, at the quicker pace. Both the UDP and the PUP had concentrated on the primacy of the Talks and the Secretary of State indicated that she acknowledged to them both that there had, up to now, been a problem with the flow of information. She also confirmed that the general view among the parties had been that they now regretted not moving on a Heads of Agreement paper before the Christmas break. With hindsight most had now acknowledged that it had proved difficult to maintain any kind of momentum given the various security problems experienced during the past 2 weeks. **The Secretary of State** also confirmed that the Narey Inquiry into the events at the Maze Prison had now been extended to take a much wider look at the arrangements for containing terrorist prisoners in Northern Ireland.

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Mr Trimble said that he felt the real destabilising of the Talks process had occurred during over 10/11 December. The paper agreed by both the UUP and SDLP, when met with violent Sinn Fein opposition, was sidelined by the Irish Government. The only conclusion which he could reach was that the process was being operated at the behest of Sinn Fein. He encouraged the Secretary of State to now make quick headway to allay fears which existed in both communities.

Mr Murphy asked if it would be helpful if confidence-building measures were kept exclusively for the Liaison Sub-Committee. **Mr Maginnis** replied that he was not in favour of this Committee as he felt that the Secretary of State had taken control of it outside the Talks process. He saw no point in pursuing a role in this Committee unless it was to be given some real "clout". Furthermore he maintained that if the UUP and SDLP had been backed up by the Government on 10/11 December the process would now be considerably further on than it was as of today. If this had been done other elements would have been given an insurmountable barrier to climb if they had wanted to destroy the Talks.

At this point **Mr Maginnis** raised a subject which had quite obviously been annoying him greatly for some time. He reported that members of the RUC were to be taken off on a trip to Harlem, New York, to study self-regulatory policing. He was also aware that 3 senior RUC officers, together with 3 senior officials from the Northern Ireland Office, had met to discuss the possibilities of two-tier policing. Although the UUP had no intention of leaving the process they felt that they were in great danger of having their position secretly undermined. **Mr Maginnis** said that it had become quite clear to him that senior NIO officials were now actively investigating measures

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which the Secretary of State had assured him would not be considered. **The Secretary of State** noted what he had said but asked if it would be possible to return to the original question of confidence-building measures, i.e. would it be helpful to have all confidence-building measures dealt with in the Liaison Sub-Committee. **Mr Trimble** replied that he would certainly be very much in favour of this and **Mr Maginnis** added that he saw it as an essential contribution to the process. **Mr Donaldson** added that he was in the process of preparing a report on confidence-building measures which had been raised already and would be happy to submit this report to the Secretary of State on its completion. **The Secretary of State** confirmed that from now on all new confidence-building measures would be dealt with in the Liaison Sub-Committee, although she reserved the right to discuss separately certain other subjects which naturally fell outside the talks, in the pursuit of good government.

Mr Ingram returned to Mr Maginnis's point about the police and the alleged visit to Harlem and confirmed that he had no knowledge of this overseas trip. However, he indicated that it was operational policy for RUC officers to visit other countries to experience at first hand other policing methods and for them to host return visits to show others how they dealt with the special situation which existed in Northern Ireland. **Mr Ingram** confirmed that he would not, as a matter of course, get involved in such exchanges nor would senior NIO officials seek to direct the Chief Constable to organise such visits. **Mr Ingram** drew attention to an article he had published before Christmas which had highlighted the need for a change in the policing of Northern Ireland in the event of an overall settlement. It was more than likely that this would involve a community based approach and would certainly involve senior officials from the Northern Ireland Office. **Mr Trimble** interjected

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at this point by saying that he knew that there were elements within the NIO which had an interest in buying off the Republican Movement by "carving up" the RUC and that he believed that they were engaged in such moves right now. He said that it must stop immediately although he was not sure if the Secretary of State or Mr Ingram were involved or party to the discussions. **The Secretary of State** replied that she was aware that he had a deep concern but she reiterated that there was no hidden agenda behind the Police Bill. There was no long-term strategy but at the same time it was important to have various options for consideration. **Mr Trimble** replied that he was most anxious that the Secretary of State should put an end to interference by senior NIO officials as he was convinced that these people had the potential to wreck the whole process. **The Secretary of State** replied by saying that Mr Ingram was in full control and that nothing untoward was happening. **Mr Maginnis** said that he doubted the extent of the Secretary of State's knowledge on this issue because he considered that the Police Bill had now given certain elements the opportunity to open up channels which could be worked towards a republican agenda. He claimed that he had good access to reasonably accurate knowledge about what was going on and he was genuinely concerned if the same approach was being taken on the parades issue. **Mr Empey** reminded the meeting about a remark which had been made to him 3 to 4 years ago by a senior official within the NIO. He had been told that the then Secretary of State had got very little influence for his £600M a year. **Mr Empey** wondered out loud what conversation could have proceeded this statement. **Mr Trimble** wound this part of the meeting up by saying that his party had real worries that if a policy of community policing was followed, and if the parades were treated in the same way, there was every chance that the country would be divided into sectarian ghettos and a civil war of Bosnian proportion could be the outcome.

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Mr Donaldson raised the issue of the prisoner situation within the Maze. While welcoming the Narey Inquiry he had 2 specific worries with regard to the prison. He had heard reports that a number of redundancies were to take place within the Northern Ireland Prison Service in April. He considered this to be utter madness and was extremely worried as to how it would be interpreted by the public and how it would affect the already rock bottom morale of prison officers. He said it would prove to be extremely helpful if these redundancies could be postponed for the time being. He also asked if it would be possible for him to have access to the Maze and Maghaberry prisons to give him the opportunity to see conditions at first hand, and to talk to some of the people inside. **Mr Maginnis** said that he had already taken up such an invitation from the Secretary of State and while it proved useful he did not want to interfere with the good housekeeping practices within the Northern Ireland Prison Service. **The Secretary of State** noted all the concerns raised and asked UUP members to raise these issues with Mr Ingram and Mr Shannon.

Mr Trimble said that he had shown the most recent Heads of Agreement paper to a senior party colleague earlier in the morning. He had commented that he had seen such progress 5 years ago but on that occasion most of the good work had been lost when NIO officials had tidied the paper up. **The Secretary of State** noted what he said but directed the conversation on to the mechanism for introducing the Heads of Agreement paper which Mr Trimble had agreed with the Prime Minister on 5 January. She asked if he felt he would be in a position to introduce the paper once he had sought and attained the support of the Irish Government and the SDLP. **Mr Trimble** replied that he did not intend to introduce the paper, rather he hoped it would be tabled as a joint British Government, Irish Government,

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UUP, SDLP paper. Failing this he hoped it would be introduced by the Prime Minister. **The Secretary of State** said that it was vital that the paper was introduced by the end of this week or next Monday at the very latest but that it was important that Mr Trimble took the views of the Irish Government and the SDLP in advance.

Mr Trimble agreed with this scenario and said that he was confident that once the paper was introduced it would convince the public that the whole process was not being driven by Sinn Fein. He would take steps to avoid the SDLP feeling that they had been bounced into agreement by talking to them on a private basis beforehand.

Mr Murphy confirmed that the Ministerial team were seeing the Prime Minister the next day to discuss the way forward for the rest of this week and next week and that he was also going to fulfil a longstanding dinner engagement with senior members of the SDLP that night. He asked Mr Trimble to let him know beforehand if he had had an opportunity to talk to Mr Hume about the new Heads of Agreement paper. Both undertook to keep the other up-to-date with what was being discussed in advance of the dinner. **Mr Trimble** said that he also hoped to run the document past Mr McMichael and Lord Alderdice and that he was expecting to hear from Mr Ahern some time later in the day. **The Secretary of State** asked what the UUP intended to do if, say, the Irish and/or the SDLP did not sign up to the new paper. **Mr Empey** said that in this case they intended to proceed with Monday as previously planned. **The Secretary of State** agreed and said that the document at the very least provided a good basis for discussion.

The Secretary of State asked if the UUP had given any consideration to helping to provide a mechanism which would allow the PUP to rejoin the Talks on Monday 12 January. **Mr Empey** said that if there had been UVF involvement in the Clifton Lounge shooting on New Year's Eve then there would be a difficulty in them providing such

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an opportunity. However, **Mr Maginnis** said that he did not want to see those who could offer consensus being excluded from the Talks process. Sinn Fein and their fellow travellers had made a number of statements over the past number of months which no-one had examined in great detail and he was not in favour of putting insurmountable obstacles in place for other parties if a settlement was possible.

Mr Trimble said that he was not keen to make all the running on the new Heads of Agreement paper. He would certainly talk to Hume but he was counting on the Irish and British Governments to do likewise. He saw a good opportunity for Mr Murphy to take Seamus Mallon and Mark Durkan through the proposals during his dinner on Wednesday evening. Whatever the outcome, Mr Trimble considered that the next 2 to 3 weeks would tell a tale, however it was essential that the Government was seen to be putting a stop to the "gravy train" which he felt republicans were on with regard to policing, parades and a re-opening of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry.

The Secretary of State wound the meeting up by asking if the UUP would be agreeable to all parties carrying pagers so that the Talks directorate were able to inform them immediately if papers were available for them to collect. She also confirmed that the Government would write to the UUP confirming that all future talks related confidence-building measures would be discussed within the confines of the Liaison Sub-Committee. She undertook to re-evaluate the situation regarding the new Heads of Agreement document on Friday or Saturday and confirmed that she would be in touch with Mr Trimble to review progress as she was conscious that the situation could change very quickly.

Signed

ALAN SMYTH

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