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NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE ON FRIDAY  
22 JANUARY 1982

N.B.P.R.

Present: Mr Marshall - Chairman		Mr Miller	)	
Mr Buxton	)	Mr Jackson	)	
Mr Ranson	)	Lt Col Bateman	)	
Mr Harrington	)	Maj. Wynne Davies	)	MOD
Miss Christopherson	)	Capt Carter	)	
Mr Burrows	)	Maj. Hughes	)	
Mr Fisher	)			
Mr Bates	)	Mr Pilling, Home Office		
		Mr Facer, Cabinet Office		
		Mr Evers, FCO		

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Security

The period since the last meeting<sup>\*</sup> had been a mixed one. There had been a high level of violence earlier in the period, with the murder of the Reverend Robert Bradford and attacks on off-duty members of the security forces. Recent weeks had been quieter (December was the first month since 1971 in which there had been no deaths) but this was deceptive and it was unwise to read too much significance into this lack of terrorist activity. In the interest of calming unionists' fears, the Chief Constable had cooperated with Official Unionist councillors in making arrangements whereby the public could do more to help the security forces. These arrangements were mainly for the gathering and passing on of information; no self defence body was envisaged. "Third Force" activity seemed to have lost impetus - a number of people were awaiting trial on charges arising from "Third Force" demonstrations.

2 The security forces had made good progress in the previous 2 months in arresting and charging suspected terrorists. Six of the 8 escapers from Belfast prison last June had now been arrested in the Republic, and 2 had been convicted extra-territorially, and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. In the case of Desmond Mackin, who had been deported from the United States to the Republic, the RUC were consulting the Director of Public Prosecutions as to whether they should seek to have Mackin tried extra-territorially in the Republic. No papers had yet been passed to the Irish.

3 The NIO were grateful for the "high profile" adopted by the security forces, especially the UDR, in recent months. This had been very helpful at a time of extreme tension in the community.

\* 30 October 1981.

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Other matters mentioned briefly were:

The Spearhead Battalion would be quietly withdrawn next week, and it did not at present seem that any replacement would be needed.

Personal protection weapons: Mr Miller said that it had been decided to increase the calibre of personal protection weapons available to selected UDR members;

Prisons. The situation was quiet, but there had been no break through on the 'no work' protest at Maze. The destruction of 'A' wing in Belfast prison would take 2/3 months to make good following rioting there in December. The transfer of prisoners to Magilligan prison had called for arrangements for the protection of the prison. The completion of Maghaberry prison would give rise to problems over the handling of the remaining Special Category prisoners.

#### Unionist Delegation's Visit to North America

4. On the question of a visa for the Reverend Paisley, we had been careful to be neutral and had not pressed the United States authorities either way. The same line had been adopted when the Reverend Paisley attempted to secure an interview with the UN Secretary-General. Our posts in the United States had been scrupulously correct in their approach to the unionist delegation, giving them reasonable assistance but avoiding the impression that they had official backing. The visit was likely to pass off without trouble; no great benefit seemed likely to be achieved by the delegation.

#### Political

5. The Secretary of State was committed to a political initiative. He had ruled out a return to Stormont, complete integration, and independence; and it was clear that power-sharing, in its 1974 form, was not acceptable to the main parties. He was likely to propose a two stage process: an elected Assembly with deliberative

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and monitoring functions but with legislative and executive powers, if it could agree how they should be exercised. Difficulty arose in determining the criteria which might lead to powers being devolved; a weighted majority vote in the Assembly might act as a trigger; the issue was still an open one. Responsibility for law and order would not pass to the Assembly. The Secretary of State was to have further meetings with the main parties in the near future before coming to a firm decision. He would then put his proposals to Cabinet colleagues, with a view to a Bill during the current session but the timetable was a tight one.

SDLP

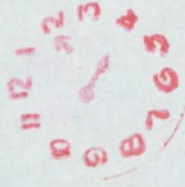
6. They had always secured about 25% of the vote and were probably recovering some of the ground lost during the hunger strike.

Anglo-Irish Matters

7. The 6 November Summit meeting had resulted in an Intergovernmental Council, in essence largely institutionalising present contacts. Further discussions with the Republic had taken place at official level, with a satisfactory outcome. Irish proposals that the intended inter-Parliamentary body would include representatives of a NI Assembly had been successfully resisted. A paper was soon to be put to the Prime Minister. Discussions between the two Attorneys General had started well, but progress now seemed to be slowing down - apparently through disagreements between Irish departments and their resolution taking second place to decisions on the Irish budget. It had been made clear that we attached great importance to progress in this field, and this would be stressed again at the forthcoming meeting between the Secretary of State and Professor Dooge.

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