



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

**Reference Code:** 2021/97/5

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30 OCTOBER 1995

*S. Done 1.11.95.*

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*Councillors A-1*

MEETING WITH PAISLEY

1. Paisley met Friday at the White House with Vice President Gore and National Security Adviser Tony Lake. The meeting lasted 40 minutes, with the Vice-President present for some 20 minutes. Paisley was accompanied by Peter Robinson.
2. White House sources characterized the meeting in positive terms, and noted that it had taken place in a very relaxed atmosphere.
3. Paisley placed particular emphasis on his proposal for a Constitutional Convention. He suggested that as a purely negotiating forum this should be more appealing to the SDLP than Trimble's Assembly, and claimed that certain refinements made to the proposal some months ago should increase its acceptability.
4. In reply to suggestions from the US side that the Convention idea might be discussed in the twin-track process, Paisley responded negatively on the basis that this would appear to give Dublin a veto.
5. Paisley stated that he would be prepared to talk with Sinn Fein in a Convention context regardless of the state of play on decommissioning, but added that his attitude in such talks would be greatly affected by progress, or lack of it, in this area. In explaining why Washington 3 remains essential, he claimed ( and quoted supporting opinion poll data ) that most Protestants do not believe the cease-fire is permanent. Asked about the apparent inconsistency in willingness to meet Adams in a Convention , but not in Talks, he replied that if Adams had taken his seat at Westminster he would not have felt it necessary to resign his seat.

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6. In exchanges which were relaxed, even jocular at times, Paisley stressed the need for the President and the Administration to be neutral in its approach ( the tone was considerably less strident than in the DU P press document - see Mr McKee's 628 ) . If it did, Paisley would make no difficulties during the President's visit. It was hinted that DUP members of Belfast City Council might play their part in the programme ( the humor included jokes about the civic Christmas tree being green! ).
7. Overall, the US side , faced with a more mellow Paisley than they expected , were pleased at the fact of the meeting and thought the substance interesting. While there is some curiosity on the US part about the Convention idea, if only because of the rarity value of a positive proposal from Paisley , they recognize that they were left with no clear sense of how far, if at all, Paisley was willing to go to meet the underlying realities of all- party talks.