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Reference Code: 2021/98/16

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FOR: BRIGID BYRNE/EMBASSY, LONDON

FROM: C. O'Shea

DATE: 23 July 1996

PAGES: 2

**Extract of comments of Michael Ancram following Prime Minister's
meeting with fringe loyalist politicians**

23 July 1996

Ancram John White is one of the two elected delegates to the negotiations at Castle Buildings in Stormont and as such he has gone with his party leader and with the other loyalist parties to see the Prime Minister and that is a reflection that the loyalist ceasefire remains in place.

Interviewer Sinn Féin says that demonstrates British double standards because the Prime Minister hasn't met with Gerry Adams ?

Ancram Well, we have made it clear, as I said earlier, that the IRA ceasefire has not been restored. Once it is restored both Governments have said that Sinn Féin can participate in negotiations.

Interviewer Is today's meeting just basically a sub to the loyalist parties in order to try and keep the loyalist ceasefire in tact ?

Ancram The Prime Minister made it clear as did the Secretary of State that they will talk to all those who are involved in the negotiations and it is important that those negotiations now move forward constructively and positively and that is the intention of both the Government in London and the Government in Dublin.

Interviewer But why did this meeting take place at this time then ?

Ancram Well, a number of meetings took place last week between party leaders and the Prime Minister and this is a part of that series.

Interviewer Mr Ancram, can I ask you about the damage done to the schools. What's your reaction to this ?

Ancram Well, I wanted to come today to see two schools and I hope to see more tomorrow because they are visible evidence of the destruction that is done by the type of violence we saw over these last two weeks to the very heart of the community. These are schools which actually provide for the children, for the next generation. The school I'm visiting at the moment is one that provides for children with particular difficulties and it really is a sign of the total horror of that type of violence that it not only strikes at individuals, but it also strikes, as I say at the heart of the community itself.

END.

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FOR: B. BYRNE/EMBASSY, LONDON

FROM: C O'SHEA

DATE: 22 July 1996

PAGES: 3

Comments by David Ervine DUP and Gary McMichael UDP, 22 July 96
on Radio Ulster

Interviewer: When you meet with the Prime Minister today, what, Gary McMichael will you be saying to him?

McMichael: Well, I think that a number of issues would need to be addressed. First of all, the talks process, we need to see movement, we have to build upon the process to give people confidence that the way forward is the democratic way. And secondly we have to see the British Government deal effectively with the IRA threat which threatens to bring the whole house down.

Interviewer: How, David Ervine, would you like to think that the Prime Minister will answer the questions that you will be putting to him? How, for instance, could he reassure you that he was prepared to deal effectively with the IRA threat?

Ervine: Well, I don't think he'll tell us a whole lot about what he might do about an IRA threat. I'm sure he'll say that everything that can be done will be done. Essentially there are other arguments as well that I think everybody last week looked into the abyss and didn't like what they saw, the vast majority of people and I imagine the Prime Minister is one of those, and I'm sure that the whole basis of meeting us is to look at how he might move to put the talks process forward; because I think Gary has made this point publicly quite a lot that the whole process in Northern Ireland is hanging by a thread and the only

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glimmer of hope is the talks process in Stormont, so that's where all the energies and all the effort has to be placed. We have prevaricated and played games for seven weeks when the people of Northern Ireland expected better and frankly now, I think it's time we got on with some real work. I'm sure that that's why the Prime Minister is wanting to meet, not just us, but I'm sure he's going to meet all delegations at the talks.

Interviewer: What if, Gary McMichael, if the Prime Minister's ideas on how things might be moved forward, was that he would meet you, representatives of the Loyalist paramilitaries, and that then that would be an excuse whereby he would be able to meet with Sinn Féin as his next step along.

McMichael: Well, I don't think that is a sensible way forward, nor do I think it's likely. Sinn Féin are precluded from negotiations and from meetings with Ministers in legislation and I think it would be very difficult for the situation to arise where Ministers were not allowed to talk to Sinn Féin but the Prime Minister decided to do so. There are certainly those out there who will seek to portray this historic meeting as merely a subterfuge, as an opportunity to open the door for Sinn Féin. That's certainly not the case and what I'd have to say is that if it did turn out that it was an attempt to do so, to engage with Sinn Féin without an IRA ceasefire, then Loyalists would find it very difficult to reconcile maintaining a place within the negotiations.

Interviewer: You could see, David Ervine, though, how people might see that this was a possible scenario. Here we have the Prime Minister meeting and shaking hands, one assumes for the first time, with people who have terrorist convictions and that is one of the problems which apparently exists with some of the representatives of Sinn Féin. Might this be the situation as you see it?

Ervine: I think Gary has alluded to that. There will be all kinds of people who will read all kinds of things into it. There's no way that the Prime Minister can be in a position to meet Sinn Féin until there is a ceasefire. I only wish he could, I only wish that they could

enter the process. He's meeting us and it's as simple as that. I think it's also in recognition of the maintenance of the Loyalist ceasefire that he's meeting us and therefore it's in direct contravention to any notion that he should meet Sinn Féin.

Interviewer: On the subject of ceasefires, he will doubtless be looking for reassurance from both of you as to the situation regarding the ceasefire by the Combined Loyalist Military Command, will you be able to give him those assurances?

Ervine: I think what we will try and do is give the Prime Minister an absolute up-to-date definitive circumstance in relation to the Loyalist ceasefire. It's something that I've been unable to do publicly for almost a week now. I think he'll be grateful for that analysis and it will of course place him in a position where he's in the knowledge of that but by the same token, there are some things that we want to say to him, that can benefit those within the Loyalist community who are genuinely striving for peace.

Interviewer: Are there things, Gary McMichael, that you want to say to the Prime Minister that you couldn't tell me about, that you couldn't tell your own constituency about if you like.

Ervine: Well, I think that it would be naive of me to be going to speak to the Prime Minister without having first consulted my constituency and certainly, we will be making very clear to the Prime Minister who has this opportunity to hear for the first time, at first hand, the views of the Loyalist community, the anger, frustration and alienation which is felt about the manner in which Loyalism has been addressed in the peace process, the lack of recognition for the positivity and constructive approach which Loyalism has taken over the last two years, under severe provocation and the anxiety which is being felt about the potential for the IRA to run roughshod over this whole process and to bring it to its knees.