

Mr McGeorge

FROM: PS/Paymaster General
3 December 1991

cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Paymaster General (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr A P Wilson - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr McMullan - B
Mr Daniell - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr McClelland - B

McGeorge

Mr. C. Ritchie

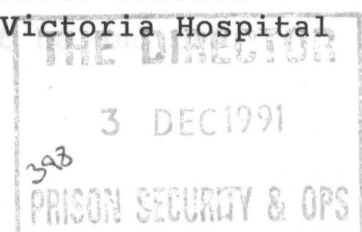
James McGeorge
4/12/91

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

PAYMASTER GENERAL - MEETING REV I PAISLEY ON THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER

1. At the request of Dr Paisley, the Paymaster General met with the MP for North Antrim in the House of Lords on Thursday 28 November to discuss the recent bomb attack in HMP Belfast and security issues in general; Mr Maccabe attended the meeting. In the event the meeting focussed on the prison issues and there was no discussion on wider security matters. Despite calls earlier in the week that Lord Belstead should resign following the bomb attack in Belfast prison the meeting was conducted in a businesslike manner and at no time did the DUP leader call for the introduction of segregation in the aftermath of events in the prison (including the news of the second death of a prisoner as a result of injuries sustained in the bomb blast).

2. Dr Paisley referred to the case of remand prisoner Anthony Noel Clarke and the representations he had received from Clarke's family that his injuries were of such a nature that he should have been held in outside hospital for a longer period, before being returned to the prison hospital. The Paymaster General said he knew that Dr Paisley had raised the case with the Secretary of State's office and the DUP leader went on to say that the information he had received from the Free Presbyterian Chaplain (Rev McIlveen) was that Clarke was now reconciled to being treated in the prison hospital and in fact felt more secure being treated there than in the Royal Victoria Hospital. The DUP leader said he had been told that the prisoners detained in the Royal Victoria Hospital



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for treatment had expressed the view that they would prefer to be transferred to the prison hospital as soon as possible. He also made a point of conveying the thanks of prisoners injured in the explosion for the prompt action of the prison staff in responding to the attack and dealing with the casualties.

3. Dr Paisley then went on to discuss the position of the prisoners who would be taking legal action for the injuries sustained. He said that he understood that the prisoners and their families would wish to have their own GPs carry out a medical examination as soon as possible to assess the degree of injury. Mr Maccabe replied that as remand prisoners those injured in the explosion were permitted to have their own GP visit the prison and examine them and the Prison Authorities would facilitate such examinations.

4. On the general issue of the attack, Mr Paisley said he knew there was tension in the prison and he was anxious that the two deaths arising from the attack should not be used as an excuse to initiate a series of "tit for tat" killings. He stressed that HMG and the prison authorities should show that they wished to return matters to normality as quickly as possible and thus avoid a chain reaction - either within the prison or outside. The Paymaster General agreed that this was important and explained that in response to the tense situation visits for A and C Wings were being suspended until the following week and in confidence he said to Dr Paisley that this would allow the Prison Governor to convert the visiting facilities from a cubicled to an open arrangement. The DUP leader seemed to accept this information without any problems but he made the point that he did not believe it would be right for Loyalist prisoners to be punished for something they did not initiate. In regard to the change in the visiting facilities, Dr Paisley suggested that it might be unwise to have "mixed" open visits from the start but that perhaps for an initial period visits should be separate and "mixed" visiting arrangements introduced as the tension subsided and prisoners got used to the new scheme. The Paymaster General thanked Dr Paisley for this suggestion and said that he and the prison authorities would bear it in mind.

5. The meeting ended after about 30 minutes with Dr Paisley referring to two firearms appeals which he wished to discuss with the Lord Belstead at some stage. It was agreed that this issue could be followed up separately.

(PS/PMG To action)

Signed

C D KYLE
PS/Paymaster General

BEL/5285