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26 November 1981

Agrees further action?

Agreed not to publish 27/11 p+5

Dear Michael

I spoke to you on 20 November about the letter of 6 November which the Reverend Ian Paisley MP handed in on the day of the last Anglo-Irish Summit meeting. We agreed that on balance it would be best that no reply be sent at that juncture (with the "Day Of Action" in prospect in Northern Ireland on 23 November) and that probably no reply should be sent at all.

Now that the day of action is behind us we have looked at Dr Paisley's letter again. We adhere to the view that no reply should be sent. The letter does not, on the face of it, call for a reply; and in effect the strictures it contains were dealt with by the Prime Minister in her statement in the House of Commons on 10 November. One might also argue that the publication of the Joint Studies on 11 November constitutes part of the Government's response to the kind of criticisms Dr Paisley makes.

There can be little doubt that if a reply were sent now Dr Paisley, in his present belligerent mood, would seek to turn it to his own advantage. My Secretary of State is therefore of the view that this particular sleeping dog had best be left to lie.

I am copying this letter to Francis Richards (FCO).

*Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins*

M W HOPKINS