

From: PS/Secretary of State  
7 June 1996

DESK IMMEDIATE

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L) - B  
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B  
PS/PUS (B&L) - B  
PS/Sir David Fell - B  
Mr Legge - B  
Mr Leach - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Hill (B&L) - B  
Mr Stephens - B  
Mr Wood (B&L) - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Dickinson - B  
Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B

Mr Thomas - B

#### THE OPENING DAY OF NEGOTIATIONS: CHOREOGRAPHY ETC

The Secretary of State has asked to have a briefing meeting this afternoon to nail down arrangements for the handling of the start of negotiations on Monday.

I do not want to propose a detailed agenda but, as an aide memoire, it might be helpful to divide discussion into two parts. The first might consider the precise sequence of events on Monday covering, where appropriate, the following elements:

- (a) involvement of the Prime Minister, Taoiseach and other Ministers;
- (b) handling of the media;
- (c) security; and
- (d) dealing with Sinn Fein.



The second area of attention is how to deal with the Opening Plenary session itself. In this I suggest we need to address:

- (a) the Prime Minister's opening statement and what, if anything, we know about what the Taoiseach might say;
- (b) HMG's formal and more detailed opening statement - see Jonathan Stephens' minute of 6 June with preliminary draft;
- (c) how we should deal with, and how we should advise the Independent Chairman to deal with protests, objections, points of order and other procedural glitches dreamt up by the participants;
- (d) David Trimble's apparent rejection of the proposed Plenary agenda - see his letter of 7 June to Secretary of State, circulated earlier today; and
- (e) Sinn Fein's letter to the Secretary of State of 7 June (also circulated earlier today) listing the delegation they are proposing to send to the negotiations! One particular question, which relates to (d) in the previous paragraph is whether this is a group that should be allowed into Castle Buildings - if indeed that is the approach we follow.

There may be other issues that will need to be aired, but I think it is important that the Secretary of State by the end of the meeting has a pretty clear idea of where our thinking has got to on each of these. We will naturally have to think about reconvening first thing on Monday morning in the light of events over the weekend.

(SIGNED)

MARTIN HOWARD  
Private Secretary