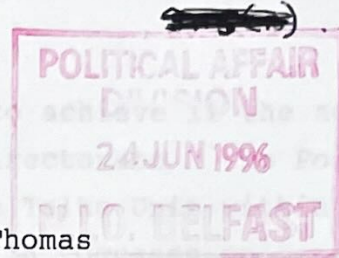


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FROM: D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
24 JUNE 1996



CC	Mr Thomas	-B
	Mr Leach	-B
	Mr Bell	-B
	Mr Stephens	-B
	Mr Maccabe	-B
	Mr Lavery	-B
	Dr Smyth	-B
	Mr McKervill	-B

Miss Harrison(L+B) -B

TALKS: NOTE-TAKERS

We spoke about establishing note-taking arrangements for the current phase of the Talks which might better suit our needs. I am grateful to Peter Smyth and John McKervill for making themselves available today.

2. I am grateful for all the work which has gone into establishing a note taking rota and to those who produced such excellent notes of Thursday's meetings. Obviously, as and when we need to provide formal notetakers to produce blow-by-blow records of each [Strand One] meeting for circulation to the other participants, we will need a rota of notetakers on the lines which has been established. But for the moment, while we are only producing records for our own internal purposes, I should like to aim for something less elaborate and more functional.

3. I am not sure whether it would be better to work on the basis of having one or two notetakers per day, and I should be grateful for views on that. The general requirement would be to attend all the briefing meetings, conference sessions and bilaterals which take place during the day and produce a single note of the day's events, preferably the following morning. That should result in a clearer "story", less repetition and less paper for everyone to read: a more effective basis for communicating what is going on to those not directly involved.

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4. That objective would be easier to achieve if the notetakers were drawn from within the Political Directorate - the Political Development Team, IPL, and PAB - or the Talks Unit within Central Secretariat. If (or when) the discussion focusses on decommissioning, SPOB might wish to field someone to join the rota.

5. The notetakers' detailed remit might be to

- attend all relevant meetings during the day
- collect all papers tabled during the day; circulate them as appropriate [or arrange for the Political Development Team to do so] with a suitable brief explanation; and detail them in the day's report
- debrief regularly to the Political Development Team and IPL [and to Mr Thomas, Mr Leach, Mr Bell, Mr Maccabe, Mr Perry and/or Mr Watkins/Mr Lavery if they are not present or represented and points arise which are of particular relevance to them]
- [if possible] issue a brief one-page bull point summary of key developments to the "short" circulation list (and to the next day's notetaker) at lunchtime and at the end of the afternoon
- prepare a structured report of the day's events for issue before lunchtime the following day to the "long" circulation list. As suggested above, this need not be a blow-by-blow account but should identify significant developments, set out key lines of argument and record any Government commitments
- debrief to the next day's notetaker(s) at close of business (within reason!)

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6. I think I can see how this would work with a single notetaker, although the individual would obviously have a lot of ground to cover. A different and possibly more complicated model would need to be developed if we worked on two notetakers a day. Perhaps you, Alan, Peter and John could discuss how it might work in practice, and which model would be best.

(Signed)

D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
EXT CB 22317

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