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FROM: G HARRISON
CPL DIVISION
6 JUNE 1996

DESK IMMEDIATE

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) -B
PS/PUS (L&B) -B
Mr Thomas -B
Mr Leach -B
Mr Bell -B
Mr Hill -B
Mr Maccabe -B
Mr Stephens -B
Mr Dickinson -B
Mrs McNally

PS/Michael Ancram

MINISTER'S CASE NO JMO/162/96 - LETTER FROM DR ALDERDICE

Dr Alderdice wrote to the Minister on 24 April, in response to his letter of 18 April giving preliminary details of the Negotiations and Forum, including proposed remuneration.

2. A reply was delayed while decisions were being taken on various matters. Several of Dr Alderdice's points on allowances were answered in the annex to the Secretary of State's letter of invitation to the parties, sent on 4 June but he also raises other matters on which it would be courteous to reply.

3. A draft letter for the Minister's consideration is attached. It is recommended that this is issued as soon as possible.

signed Gillian Harrison

G HARRISON (MISS)
Constitutional and Political Division
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CPL1/AJH/22271

DRAFT

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June 1996

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY MICHAEL ANCRAM

Thank you for your letter of 24 April in response to mine of 18 April about arrangements for Negotiations and Forum. I am very sorry that you have not received an earlier reply. It will be a matter for each party concerned to decide how to allocate I hope that some of your queries on allowances were answered by the annex to the Secretary of State's invitation to negotiations of 4 June. But you did raise other points on which I hope I can provide clarification. The annex to the letter of invitation also states that we intend to pay a party research grant in respect I have noted your comments on timetable. It will, of course, be a matter for members of the Forum to determine the frequency of its meetings either in Plenary or a Committee subject to the constraints of the legislation. The date of the first meeting of the Forum will be confirmed shortly. Separate material is also being prepared for the use of those attending the Forum.

On the question of size of negotiating teams, both the Ground Rules and the legislation provide that the negotiating teams must consist of those who have been elected. Therefore, those parties with only

two elected delegates may only field those two at the negotiating table. However, paragraph 11 of the Ground Rules also provides that in any meeting each party may have three in support who are not necessarily elected.

You also raised points about research and staffing. On the latter point, the annex to Sir Patrick's letter of 4 June indicated that we propose to pay a flat rate party allowance of £300 (or such lesser figure as may be agreed in the Business Committee) for each day, in which the party concerned is involved in negotiations. This is intended to cover party secretarial and other support staff. It will be a matter for each party concerned to decide how to allocate this allowance. This will not, however, apply in respect of attendance at the Forum.

Turning to research grants, the annex to the letter of invitation also states that we intend to pay a party research grant in respect of vouched expenditure on relevant items of work relating to either the negotiations or the Forum, up to a maximum of £6,000 per quarter.

Further details of these allowances will be provided for delegates to the negotiations. Separate material is also being prepared for the use of those attending the Forum.

Finally, I look forward to seeing you on Monday at what I hope will be to the beginning of constructive and purposeful negotiations.