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ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
SECURITY POLICY & OPERATIONS  
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FROM: D J R HILL  
CPL DIVISION  
15 JULY 1996

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| cc: PS/PUS (L&B)            | -B |
| PS/Sir David Fell           | -B |
| Mr Thomas                   | -B |
| Mr Legge                    | -B |
| Mr Leach                    | -B |
| Mr Bell                     | -B |
| Mr Watkins                  | -B |
| Mr Steele                   | -B |
| Mr Wood (L&B)               | -B |
| Mr Stephens                 | -B |
| Mr Beeton                   | -B |
| Mr Maccabe                  | -B |
| Mr Lavery                   | -B |
| Mr Perry                    | -B |
| Mr Currie                   | -B |
| Mr Campbell-Bannerman       | -B |
| Ms Harrison/Mr Whysall      | -B |
| Ms Checksfield/Ms Mapstone  | -B |
| Mr Dickinson                | -B |
| Mr Lamont RID               | -B |
| HMA Dublin                  | -B |
| Ms Collins - Cabinet Office | -B |

PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B  
PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B

**TALKS, 16/17 JULY - POSSIBLE HANDLING**

The talks were adjourned on 9 July on the basis that they would resume on 16 July (10 am - 7 pm), with any "plenary" at the call of the chair, and continue on 17 and 18 July.

2. There is considerable media and political interest in the arrangements. Any IGC on 18 July would presumably prevent any talks business that day.

3. On the positive side, all participants seem poised to attend talks tomorrow. It provides an important opportunity to reassert the primacy and value of the political process. On the other hand, it would be unrealistic to expect delegations to pick up discussion of the rules of procedure as if nothing had happened. Many delegations have a lot to get off their chest and the SDLP in particular may wish

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to challenge the Unionist parties' commitment to the Mitchell principles: they will be under political pressure to demonstrate their nationalist credentials in order to maintain support within their own community vis a vis Sinn Fein. They and other delegations may also wish to have a crack at HMG and the RUC, from widely varying angles.

4. The Chairmen will look to us for advice on how to handle the next couple of days. The options probably lie between bilaterals and a round table discussion. A complicating factor is that Senator Mitchell will not be back in Northern Ireland until about 3 pm tomorrow and does not wish, in the circumstances, to delegate his role to Prime Minister Holkeri. Martha Pope has provisionally arranged meetings with:

- HMG 3.30 pm
- Irish Government 4.15 pm
- SDLP 5 pm
- UUP 6 pm

That seems likely to rule out the possibility of a round table meeting tomorrow.

5. In all the circumstances, our desired objective for the next two days might be to secure, by Wednesday evening, a joint reaffirmation of commitment to the talks process. Getting there may not be easy. A possible strategy might be to;

- suggest to Senator Mitchell that he leaves 16 July for bilateral contacts but convenes a "plenary" for early on 17 July to give everyone an opportunity to register their views on the implications of recent events;
- lower media expectations of any developments during tomorrow (though the media village is bound to receive numerous visits - with conflicting messages - during the day and we should be prepared to put a constructive gloss

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on things at a suitable moment);

- seek bilateral meetings during 16 July with the Irish Government, SDLP and UUP at least (and possibly the DUP/UKUP) with a view to drawing the venom of any criticism and encouraging them to take a constructive line in any "plenary". (Officials might aim to touch base with the other parties). Ideally we should aim to get the two Governments sufficiently in step to have a joint meeting with Senator Mitchell;
- set the tone for a constructive exchange in any "plenary" by making a carefully balanced opening statement;
- attempt to capture any positive commitments in a Talks Statement to be issued by close of play on 17 July.

6. I attach drafts to the possible opening statement by the Secretary of State and other possible Talks Statement, to illustrate what I believe we could reasonably aim for. The Political Development Team will be available for an oral briefing in Castle Buildings from 8.15 am tomorrow onwards.

(signed)

D J R HILL  
CPL DIVISION  
OAB 210 6528

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(15 JULY 3pm)

TALKS, 16/17 JULY - POSSIBLE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF STATE

1. Mr Chairman, since we last met to confer on the rules of procedure for these negotiations the Province has experienced some of the darkest days in the history of the past 25 years.
2. Those days have been marked by violence and the threat of violence. One man has been killed in circumstances which have all the hallmarks of a sectarian murder. Another has been killed amid scenes of violent public disorder. Three policemen have been shot and injured and many other people throughout the Province injured in one way or another as a result of the wave of violence which has been unleashed. Dozens of people have been intimidated from their homes. The public have been prevented from going about their lawful occasions by illegal blockades backed up by blatant intimidation. A major hotel has been blown up. There has been huge damage to property throughout Northern Ireland, which will cost millions of pounds to put right. We are only a hairsbreadth away from a full scale resumption of republican and loyalist terrorism throughout Northern Ireland, with consequent risks to life and property throughout these islands. Public and business confidence in Northern Ireland, whether as a tourist destination, a place to invest in or simply somewhere to live, has taken a sharp knock and put back all the advances of recent years. The level of suspicion and fear between the two major political traditions in Northern Ireland is higher than I have ever known it. Even the relationship between the two Governments - despite their joint determination to work constructively together - has been under some strain. Above all, confidence in the rule of law has been stretched, perhaps to breaking point.
3. The situation could hardly be more grave.
4. There is much to regret and criticise in the events of the past

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few days but I do not wish to engage in that luxury, or to cast the first stone.

5. What I believe we must do, individually and collectively, is to re-establish our commitment to the core values of civilised society and to re-assert our absolute determination to seek a peaceful resolution of the political tensions which lie beneath the surface of recent events.

6. For my part, on behalf of the British Government, I wish to restate our fundamental commitment to exercise jurisdiction in Northern Ireland with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people of Northern Ireland in their diversity. Our approach will continue to be based on full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, social and cultural rights and freedom from discrimination for all citizens; on parity of esteem; and on just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities.

7. Against that background, I acknowledge - and commit myself and my Government to face - a number of challenges.

8. We will support the RUC and the army in upholding law and order, without fear or favour, throughout Northern Ireland; and in rebuilding public confidence in their ability and will to do so.

9. As to the particular issue which served as a lightning rod for the underlying political tensions - the routing of particular parades - there is a clear need to find a better way of balancing legitimate rights to march and demonstrate one's identity with the equal rights of others in the community not to be intimidated or seriously inconvenienced by such demonstrations. I have announced [the setting up of an independent review.....]. I trust this will help the search for mutually acceptable arrangements in relation to particular parades in future.

10. I have to say, however, that I believe that this issue is only

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one symptom of a deeper malaise and that it will be easier to resolve in the context of a functioning political accommodation between the two main political traditions in Northern Ireland and indeed between those living on the island of Ireland more generally.

11. That brings me back to the fundamental challenge facing all of us round this table. Can we, through open, honest, committed dialogue reach agreement on a comprehensive political settlement which could defuse intercommunal tension in Northern Ireland and underpin a lasting peace?

12. This talks process provides the necessary mechanism. With its wide participation and open agenda it provides the best, perhaps the only, answer to those who fear that Northern Ireland may be about to fall back into the hell from which it had emerged. We as politicians committed to the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the report of the International Body have the opportunity and the responsibility to demonstrate that there is a political way forward, a peaceful route to a settlement of ancient quarrels.

13. One further challenge facing us is to correct some of the misperceptions which have abounded about the talks process. I fear that some at least of the concerns in the Unionist community which were reflected in the protest action inspired by the Orange order last week were based on a distorted view of the handling and objectives of the talks process. Those concerns are misplaced and we all have a duty to make that clear. The objective of the talks process is to find an accommodation which is - at a minimum - likely to prove acceptable to at least a majority in each of the two main political traditions in Northern Ireland. Mr McCartney has wisely reminded us that as a matter of political reality any agreement will need to secure broad support right across the community in Northern Ireland.

14. There is therefore no question of undermining or threatening the rights or identity of either tradition.

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15. We are embarked on a political negotiation which could bring solid benefits to all the people of these islands - except the gunmen - and which does not require anyone to sacrifice their fundamental political interests. There are inbuilt safeguards at every stage to ensure that there is no question of one tradition being dominated by another.

16. The backdrop provided by the past few days is a sombre one; but the talks process gives us the opportunity to provide a positive lead and to seize the initiative from those who would seek to drag the Province back into the nightmare of violence. Ten days ago we were tantalisingly close to agreement on an effective and widely acceptable negotiating framework. Our objective now must be to finalise that agreement and demonstrate real forward movement in the talks, to give hope to all those in the community who are looking for principled leadership towards a peaceful resolution of the situation.

17. Others will no doubt wish to register their own positions on these important matters, but I trust they will - so far as possible - avoid recriminations, look forward and take the opportunity to rededicate themselves to the search for a principled political accommodation.

(15 JULY 3pm)

**DRAFT TALKS STATEMENT, 16/17 JULY**

The participants in the multi-party talks at Castle Buildings took the opportunity of [today's] meeting to exchange views on the events which have taken place in Northern Ireland over the past few days, and agreed this statement.

2. [While they each saw much to regret and criticise] they were united in reaffirming their determination to bring about a comprehensive political settlement which would tackle the root causes of intercommunal tension in Northern Ireland and underpin a lasting peace.

3. The two Governments and the participating political parties reaffirmed their total and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the report of the International Body. They all acknowledged that neither violence nor the threat of violence could have any part to play in producing a fair and principled agreement.

4. They committed themselves anew to providing the political leadership necessary to demonstrate the existence of a viable alternative to the politics of terror and intimidation.

5. They drew attention to the fact that the talks process, with its wide participation and comprehensive agenda, provides a realistic and effective means of addressing all the major issues which need to be resolved if there is to be a peaceful accommodation between the two main political traditions. The agreed requirement that any outcome should be likely to secure the support of at least a majority in each of the two main political traditions in Northern Ireland provides reassurance to both sides that their interests and identity



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will not be threatened.

11 JULY 1996

- Mr. [Name]
- Mr. [Name]
- Mr. [Name]
- Mr. [Name]
- Mr. [Name]
- Mr. [Name]
- Mr. [Name]
- Mr. [Name]

MR JONES - ENB

PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR FORUM TALKS - ESTIMATE OF IN-YEAR BID

VERSION 5 - UPDATED 11 JULY 1996

1. As discussed, I now attach a further updated schedule of estimates which includes a separate entry to show an estimate of expenditure to be incurred for both the Negotiations and the Forum between April - and July 1996. I am grateful for the information given at (O) - Forum costs, which has been provided by Forum Secretariat staff. You will also note at (g), Central Secretariat Political Development Costs, which have been provided by Mrs McAuley, Central Secretariat. This latter version of the schedule provides NIO with an overall picture of likely expenditure and I hope this proves helpful to colleagues.

2. Once again the schedule has been prepared on other estimates for the following:-

- (a) elected representatives - daily 'loss of earnings', subsistence allowances and travel expenses;
- (b) party support staff - subsistence and travel expenses and 'party allowances' for negotiators;
- (c) hotel & ground to parties;
- (d) food & drink;
- (e) other staff costs;
- (f) other miscellaneous.

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