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FROM: J A STEPHENS
IPL DIVISION
18 JULY 1996

cc: PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Legge
Mr Leach
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Ray
Mr Wood (L&B)
Mr Hill (L&B)
Mr Beeton
Mr Stephens
Mr Maccabe
Ms Harrison
Mr Whysall
Mr Campbell-Bannerman
Mr Lamont - RID
HMA Dublin

cc
JM
Mr Sean 22/7
for IGC
pages
19/7
PA

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) - B

IGC 18 JULY: HANDLING

A number of briefs have been submitted for today's IGC. In advance of this afternoon's pre-brief, I thought it might be helpful to try to pull together some thoughts on handling the meeting as a whole.

What do we want to achieve?

2. We want to leave this meeting with:

- a sense that the partnership between the two Governments has been restored;
- a clear commitment by both Governments to getting rapid progress in the negotiations;

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- some credibility re-established in Irish eyes as to the even handedness and impartiality of our approach in Northern Ireland.

Tete a tete

3. I suggest Ministers use this for three purposes:

- to show at the very beginning that Ministers appreciate the seriousness of last week's events and the consequences for the political process. There is much comment, particularly in Irish papers, that British Ministers do not understand the consequences. It may help to lance this boil at the beginning by recognising that this was a serious set back for the rule of law, that the RUC's credibility has been undermined, that the nationalist perception (whatever the truth) is that the Government caved in to Orange pressure and that their confidence in the political process has therefore been badly shaken;
- report any positive news from Trimble (who is seeing Michael Ancram via the VCR at 12.00). Although this will be returned to in the plenary discussion of political matters, the earlier we can insert positive thinking about the way forward into Irish minds the better;
- agree how Ministers want to handle the rest of the IGC and subsequent press briefing. It would be useful at this stage to establish that both Governments want to end up seen to be standing shoulder to shoulder in support of the Talks process.

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Political matters

4. After the restricted security session, there is due to be a restricted discussion on political matters. Mr Hill's submission of yesterday provides an excellent brief. Perhaps there are three key points to bear in mind:

- the Irish will be in search of reassurance on the fundamental commitment and approach of the Government to the political process. At moments of crisis, the Irish system tends to fall in paranoia that HMG is resiling from it whole analysis and approach. It will be important to provide that reassurance unequivocally by reasserting our commitment to the Agreement, Joint Declaration, Framework Document and the three stranded analysis. The Framework Document will be a particular touch stone for the Irish Government, with its pledges (in paragraph 20) to vigorous impartiality and full respect for parity of esteem; tiresome though it is, unless we repeat our commitments, the Irish will tend to assume we have resiled;
- we can press the Irish as to whether they see consequences in last week's events for their own approach to unionists. The Irish side will focus on the nationalist alienation revealed at the end of last week. But it will be worth reminding them of the unionist alienation revealed at the beginning of the week. Far from HMG being able to "deliver" the unionists, unionists mounted a direct challenge to the British state. They revealed deep paranoia about both Governments' intentions towards them: a fear that the Irish Government's intentions were malevolent, and the British Government was supine. That suggests that both Governments have failed in their joint approach so far to take adequate account of unionist fears and answer them - even though we are convinced that both Governments' real intentions should be welcome to unionists. It would be worth drawing out from the Irish Government what lessons they see in this

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for their own approach. (The most obvious is the need for a direct engagement between unionists and nationalists, including the Irish Government - for which the Talks process provides the framework);

agree the immediate action required in the Talks process. This comes down to resolving rules of procedure and the agenda for the coming plenary, with a view to a plenary session early next week. There may be news to report from Trimble.

Confidence Issues

3. On parades, Ministers might aim to:

absorb recriminations. Any detailed account of events should come from the Chief Constable;

explain the purpose of the review, and consult the Irish Government (or promise consultation) on terms of reference and composition. Suggestions for a Parades Commission to adjudicate on routes can be referred to the review. Pending any outcome, we should indicate an open mind on all such suggestions.

demonstrate a grasp of the sensitivities of forthcoming parades, particularly the Apprentice Boys' in Londonderry, and the strategy for avoiding confrontation.

6. The final item is rebuilding public confidence in the security forces. This provides the opportunity to reassure the Irish side of our commitment to fair and impartial policing, by security forces

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for their own approach. (The most obvious is the need for a direct engagement between unionists and nationalists, including the Irish Government - for which the Talks process provides the framework);

- agree the immediate action required in the Talks process. This comes down to resolving rules of procedure and the agenda for the opening plenary, with a view to a plenary session early next week. There may be news to report from Trimble.

Confidence issues

5. On parades, Ministers might aim to:

- absorb recriminations. Any detailed account of events should come from the Chief Constable;
- explain the purpose of the review, and consult the Irish Government (or promise consultation) on terms of reference and composition. Suggestions for a Parades Commission to adjudicate on routes can be referred to the review. Pending any outcome, we should indicate an open mind on all such suggestions.
- demonstrate a grasp of the sensitivities of forthcoming parades, particularly the Apprentice Boys' in Londonderry, and the strategy for avoiding confrontation.

6. The final item is enhancing public confidence in the security forces. This provides the opportunity to reassure the Irish side of our commitment to fair and impartial policing, by security forces

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who seek to secure the confidence of both sides of the community. Inevitably last week's events will raise the profile of policing in the negotiations, with nationalists placing radical reform of the RUC firmly on the table.

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cc: PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) -B
PS/Michael Adams (L&B) -B
PS/PS (L&B) -B
PS/Sir David Bell -B
Mr Thomas -B
Mr Leach -B
Mr Bell -B
Mr Watkins -B
Mr Stephens -B
Mr Whyte -B
Mr Lambert RD -B
Ms Gable -B

(* Private Office (S) please pass

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

BREACHES OF THE MITCHELL PRINCIPLES

The main purpose of this minute is to record that we do not expect the Irish side to raise the question of how to handle SDLP and Alliance Party allegations that the UUP and DUP have breached the Mitchell principles.

2. The Independent Chairman have written to both Governments drawing their attention to formal allegations made by the Alliance Party and the SDLP against the UUP and DUP, and by the UUP against the SDLP.

3. An initial conversation with Mr Cooney suggests that the Irish do not wish to make too much of this. They obviously do not want to reject either of the two main Unionist parties from the table process, though they remain highly critical of the UUP and DUP (and claim to have video tape evidence of some highly inflammatory remarks by Reverend William McCrea in particular).

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