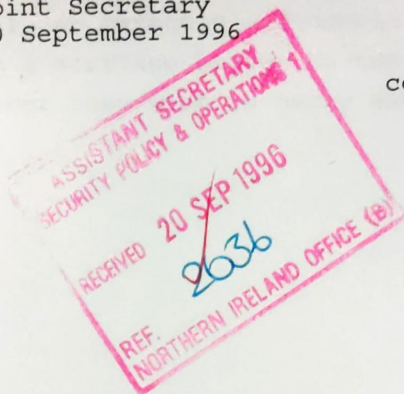


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FROM: P N BELL  
Joint Secretary  
20 September 1996



cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B  
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B  
PS/PUS (B&L) - B  
Mr Thomas o/r - B  
Mr Legge - B  
Mr Leach (B) - B  
Mr Steele - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Perry - B  
Mr Stephens - B  
Mr Priestly - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Lavery - B  
Mr Whysall (B&L) - B  
Ms Mapstone - B  
Ms Bharucha - B  
Mr Campbell Bannerman  
Mr Lamont, RID - B  
HMA, Dublin - B  
Ms Collins, Cabinet Office

MR HILL (B&L) - B

REVISED "JOINT PROPOSAL"

As requested, I passed over first thing this morning a copy of the paper attached to your minute to me of 19 September (as also a copy of Mr Lavery's "Skeleton Judgment"). You may be sure that, in doing so, I have passed on for onward transmission to Dublin the point that our Ministers believe that it is essential to present something on these lines to the UUP on Monday to test whether a deal can be struck. (Although I suspect that the first line of Irish counter argument will be to say that we should take the UUP through the ideas it contains orally, rather than giving them a piece of paper on which they can chew happily but unproductively - and for an indefinite amount of time.) I have also emphasised that our Ministers look forward to discussing, nevertheless, the handling of the trilateral with their Irish colleagues on Monday and that we may need to set aside a substantial amount of time for this purpose.

2. Given the <sup>dismal?</sup> dismissal impression that the Unionists, and Mr Taylor in particular, made on the Irish last week and the fact that

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their perception of Unionists' motivations cannot be dismissed as delusional, or paranoid - I continue to see our own role next week as acting as a marriage broker to two partners who are still not quite sure whether they want to marry each other or not.

Signed:

P N BELL

KMR/6539

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