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FROM: D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
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DESK IMMEDIATE

Mr Leach (B)

cc Mr Stephens
Mr Perry

OK

PREPARATIONS FOR TRILATERAL

1. I look forward to seeing comments from the security side of the office on the draft "Response" to the UUP questions which you circulated yesterday afternoon. In particular I hope it will be possible to build up the argument referred to at your paragraph 7(v)(b) - that the formal establishment of the Commission should, for sound practical reasons, follow the definition of and agreement on a decommissioning scheme.

2. That seems to me to be a much stronger argument with the UUP than saying that

- delay in establishing the Commission is necessary because the legislation is not yet in place. They will say that is our fault, or that they are quite happy wait until the legislation is in place; or
- it is necessary to move forward on decommissioning and politics in parallel. That amounts to "Dick Spring's fourth strand" and implies negotiating arms for political progress - an approach to which the Unionists remain totally opposed.

3. I hope we could construct a message to the UUP which majored on the two key points that

- for practical reasons the formal establishment of a Commission needs to come after agreement on a decommissioning scheme;

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- but there is an active programme of work on this issue which can and should be taken forward from day one, through the mechanism which the Governments have proposed. (We can play in here the workplan, the proto-Commission and the body of experts.)

4. We spoke about this and the Irish draft response and I undertook to have a go at drafting a short crisp written "response", building on the points above and which might be tabled at Monday's trilateral.

(Signed)

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