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FROM:

MRS D E MCNALLY

CPL DIVISION

27 SEPTEMBER 1996

SECRETARY  
BY & OPERATIONS 1

27 SEP 1996

REF.

NORTHERN IRELAND OPS 1

cc: PS/Secretary of State (B)

Mr Thomas

Mr Bell

Mr Legge

Mr Leach (L&B)

Mr Steele

Mr Watkins

Mr Wood (L&B)

Mr Hill (L&B)

Mr Lavery

Mr Maccabe

Mr Perry

Mr Stephens

Mrs Mapstone  
(w/o encls)

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PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L)

**TALKS: INDEPENDENT NOTETAKERS' DRAFT SUMMARY RECORDS OF OPENING  
PLENARY SESSIONS ON 9, 10 AND 11 SEPTEMBER 1996**

The Secretary of State may wish to cast his eye over the attached draft summary records of the Opening Plenary Sessions for 9, 10 and 11 September which have been circulated by the Independent Chairman. I understand that the Chairman will be seeking approval of these and records of previous plenaries at the next Plenary meeting on Tuesday 1 October.

2. In particular, the draft minutes include a comprehensive record of the proceedings on 10 September which focussed on the round of questions about the representations made by the DUP that the PUP and UDP were in breach of the Mitchell Principles. This particular set of minutes will be the subject of detailed scrutiny by others and could become a feature of judicial review proceedings.

**Line To Take**

3. From our viewpoint, the records appear to be a reasonably accurate account of the proceedings and contain no point (or

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RD/TYP/1699

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omissions) which it would be in HMG's interest to challenge.  
Therefore the line officials propose the British delegation should  
take is that we have no comments.

4. Nevertheless, while we see no need to say anything formally on  
the drafts, we propose to suggest discreetly to the Chairmen's staff  
that the records would read better if they were in reported speech  
throughout, and that if the records concentrated on recording  
conclusions and broad lines of argument, they would be more helpful  
for current and future readers, and less prone to challenge, than the  
nearly verbatim style they are currently aiming for.

Signed

MRS D E MCNALLY  
CPL Division  
OAB Ext 3786

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