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FROM: J MCKERVILL
Talks Secretariat
8 October 1996

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
PS/Malcolm Moss (DHSS, DOE&L) - B
PS/Baroness Denton (DED, DANI&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Leach (B&L) - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mr Priestly - B
Mr Hill (B&L) - B
Mr Lavery - B
Mr MacCabe | File - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Stephens - B
Ms Bharucha - B
Ms Mapstone - B
Mr Whysall (B&L) - B
Ms Collins, Cab Off (via IPL) - B
Mr Dickinson, TAU - B
Mr Lamont, RID, FCO - B
HMA Dublin - B
Mr Westmacott (via RID) - B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B
Mrs McNally (B&L) - B
Mr Holmes, No.10

C9110

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS: 8 OCTOBER 1996: SUMMARY

A full record of today's talks is in preparation. This note records the main developments of the day.

2. At the plenary session which began at noon, following approval of the records of the previous week's plenary meetings, the Chairman, Prime Minister Holkeri, invited statements on yesterday's terrorist bombs at HQNI. All the parties condemned the explosions and recorded their sympathy to the victims. Opening, the Secretary of State asserted the British Government's view that the bomb attack

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underlined the importance of the process in which all were currently engaged. The talks process represented the only way of making progress to allay the bitterness in the community.

3. This view was supported by all the other participants, with the exception of the UKUP whose leader, Robert McCartney, backed up by party colleague Cedric Wilson, launched into a tirade of abuse aimed principally at the two Governments, but which also included the SDLP. Both Governments were following a policy "calculated to deceive". The peace process was dead, and had been for some time. It existed only as "a figment of the imagination of cynical Government minds". The all party negotiations were an 'entire fraud'. McCartney repeated his long playing accusation that the two Governments were following an agenda of seeking a deal with terrorists. Sinn Fein, however, could not enter the talks without the declaration of a 'permanent' ceasefire, a credible portion of weapons had been handed up, and legislation to deal with the practicalities of decommission had been put in place. (Even the DUP, while claiming that Sinn Fein could not be sanitized over time and that there was no room for them in the process, encouraged further dialogue in the talks.)

4. Following a masterful, stalwart defence of the Government's position by the Secretary of State, who earned the plaudits of the vast majority of the parties present, the Chairman called an adjournment until "not later than 1200 hours on Monday" to allow for further bilaterals to take place in the hope of agreeing an agenda for the remainder of the opening plenary.

5. During the afternoon Irish and British officials met to review progress in the talks in the light of yesterday's bomb attacks and how the decommissioning stumbling block might be resolved. A constructive discussion.

6. The day ended with a bilateral with the UUP, led by Empey, who reported on a 2-hour bilateral that afternoon with the SDLP. A constructive business-like meeting which had focused on the agenda

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for the remainder of the opening plenary. Agreement on the decommissioning item had not been reached but encouragingly the two parties would meet again the next morning. The UUP would contact the British delegation to report on progress around lunchtime tomorrow. The bilateral with the Secretary of State ended with an inconclusive discussion about the criteria to be applied in deciding if Sinn Fein were able in the future to enter the talks.

Signed:

J MCKERVILL

Talks Secretariat

PS/Sir David Vell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Ball - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Wood (BAL) - B
Mr Boston - B
Mr Priestly - B
Mr Hill (BAL) - B
Mr Laver - B
Mr MacCabe - B
Mr Parry - B
Mr Stephens - B
Ms Sharucha - B
Ms Maguire - B
Mr Whysall (BAL) - B
Ms Collins, Cab Off (via IEL) - B
Mr Dickinson, TAU - B
Mr Leggett, RID FCO - B
RMA Dublin - B
Mr Westmacott (via RID) - B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B
Mrs McSally (BAL) - B

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS: MONDAY 7 OCTOBER

SUMMARY

1. A very quiet day with few of the leading players present and ultimately overshadowed by the RMT bombing. The UUP second team were more positive about their desire to do a deal on decommissioning than hitherto, but it was unclear whether this was a further tactical move or a reflection of Raper's style in comparison with his leader.

2. The UUP/SDLP bilateral failed to make the breakthrough, although all sides were confident of doing a deal on the agenda. No way through or around the roadblock in opening plenary decommissioning debate had been identified.

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