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POLITICAL AFFAIR
DIVISION
12 SEP 1996
I.O. BELFAST

FROM: D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
12 SEPTEMBER 1996

cc: PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) -B
PS/PUS (L) -B
PS/Sir David Fell -B
Mr Legge -B
Mr Leach -B
Mr Steele -B
Mr Watkins -B
Mr Bell -B
Mr Wood (L&B) -B
Mr Stephens -B
Mr Lavery -B
Mr Perry -B
Mr Maccabe -B
Mr Priestly -B
Mr Whysall (L&B) -B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman -B
Mrs Mapstone -B
Miss Bharucha -B
Mr Lamont, RID -B
HMA Dublin -B
Mr Clarke, Dublin -B
Mr Westmacott, W'ton via RID -B
Mr Oakden, No 10 -B
Ms Collins, Cab Office (via IPL) -B

L 13/9

PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) -B

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

TALKS, WEEK BEGINNING 16 SEPTEMBER - SUGGESTED GAMEPLAN

Our main priority for next week - despite the distractions of the various Rule 29 representations - should be to "take advantage" of the enforced interruption to the main business of the plenary and pursue the 'trilateral' discussions with the Irish Government and the UUP. Our objective should be to make as much progress as we can, with the Irish Government, in developing a clear understanding with the UUP on the decommissioning issue.

2. We should aim to play in our draft Bill and encourage the Irish to do likewise. This is likely to be most effective if done jointly.

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3. Additionally, we need to refine and formulate the package of understandings which the UUP are also seeking, eg on the timing of the legislation, details of the Independent Commission, nature of the commitments to be given in plenary, future role of any "decommissioning sub committee" etc. Annex C to Mr Leach's submission of 10 September (Getting on the Fast Track) could be developed as a vehicle for:

- establishing and confirming the necessary level of agreement between the two Governments and the UUP
- presenting the outcome to plenary, whether as a 'Joint Proposal' from the two Governments or a suggested 'statement of conclusions' from any plenary debate. (the precise nature of the paper will depend on the choreography of the plenary address to decommissioning, which we will also need to consider with the Irish and UUP).

4. It seems to officials that there would be considerable advantage in developing the package of understandings with the Irish and the UUP before presenting it and the draft Bills to the UUP. It would be unfortunate if the draft Bills - which are clearly a very major card - were played in but we then found that we were not in agreement with the UUP on other aspects of the package. Equally, the draft Bills do not give the whole picture and the UUP could reasonably decline to give a positive response until they knew the Governments' position on the other points they have raised. If we present them with the whole package there would be more chance of forcing them to show the colour of their money.

5. These considerations seem to point to a target timetable for the week on something like the following lines:

Mr Leach will be resubmitting the relevant annexes to his submission of 10 September. These would provide material for the Monday's proposed meeting with the UUP and could be sent to the

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Monday

- am - parties give observations on the two Governments' determination of the DUP's representation concerning the Loyalist parties
- ? - Chilcot/Dalton
- pm - meeting with the UUP to explain how we propose to proceed during the week and to check their reactions to elements/possible formulations in any package of understandings

Tuesday (assuming plenary debate on Alliance representations is deferred until Wednesday)

- am - substantial Ministerial meeting with the Irish to reach agreement on the handling of the draft Bills and on a draft paper reflecting the package of understandings
- pm - possible further bilaterals with the UUP and SDLP

Wednesday

- am - plenary debate on the Alliance Party's representations. [Governments announce that their determination will be given on Monday 23 September]
- pm (or Thurs) - trilateral meeting between the two Governments and the UUP at which they would be taken through the draft Bills and the draft paper. Discussion of the choreography of the plenary debate on decommissioning.

6. Mr Leach will be resubmitting the relevant annexes to his submission of 10 September. These would provide material for the Monday's proposed meeting with the UUP and could be sent to the

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Irish before the weekend as a basis for discussion proposed for Tuesday (at which we can say whether any changes are needed as a result of the earlier meeting with the UUP.)

7. This approach also puts maximum pressure on the Irish to sign up quickly to the proposed package of understandings. (Although it is in fact close to the 6 June package and Mr Thomas gave Mr O'hUiginn the proposed work plan at the beginning of September, they could normally be expected to crawl all over it.)

8. If this broad gameplan is accepted, I suggest that:

- Mr Bell should be invited to pass the proposed papers (see Mr Leach's separate submission) to the Irish before the weekend and propose a meeting on Tuesday (? at Castle Buildings - we could book the 5th Floor Committee Room) in preparation for a trilateral with the UUP within the following day or so
- [Michael Ancram ?] Private Office should seek to set up a meeting with the UUP during the afternoon of 16 September and explore the possibility of a full UUP delegation being available for a substantial meeting on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday.

9. Officials stand ready to discuss these proposals with the Secretary of State tomorrow morning if he would find that helpful.

10. I will let you have separately a more detailed note on the handling of Monday's plenary and the Alliance Party's representations which will set out the advantages of leaving the debate on the representations until Wednesday and deferring the delivery of the determination until Monday 23 September.

signed David Hill

D J R HILL
Political Development Team

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