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POLITICAL AFFAIR
DIVISION
10 SEP 1996
N.I.O. BELFAST

8/8

FROM: P SMYTH
10 September 1996

cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B,L&DFP) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (B, L) - B
PS/Malcolm Moss (B) - B
PS/Baroness Denton (L, DOE&DANI) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - 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 - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Stephens - B
Miss Bharucha - B
Ms Mapstone - B
Mr O'Mahony TAU - B
Mr Holmes, No 10 (via PS/Sofs) - B
Ms Collins, Cab Off (via IPL) - B
Mr Lamont, RID FCO - B
HMA Dublin - B
Mr Westmacott (via RID) - B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B
Mrs McNally (B&L) - B

11/9.
Mr M. J. [signature]
L 15/9

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS, 9 SEPTEMBER: SUMMARY 8.00 pm

A full note of yesterday's proceedings is in preparation, but recipients may wish to be aware of developments which took place in the latter part of yesterday's proceedings, which were not available for inclusion in Mr Whysall's summary note.

Basically, in the late afternoon the UUP informed the Government that the Party was making good progress with the SDLP in exploring a common approach towards agreeing the agenda for the resumed Plenary, and in parallel with that, was developing a new strategy for taking forward decommissioning. This latter initiative involved abandoning the idea of a sub-committee (too cumbersome, incapable of

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making speedy progress, and susceptible to SF influence as and when Adams joins the Talks) in favour of a series of bilateral, trilateral and quadrilateral meetings between the UUP and the two Governments, with SDLP participation on an ad hoc basis. Sight of the draft decommissioning legislation, and reassurance as to surrounding circumstances would be sought. This could lead to a general debate on decommissioning by late November, concluding with a Joint Statement from the two Governments setting out their commitment to progressing the relevant legislation as speedily as possible, and offering comfort to Unionists in areas such as the international verification committee and its operational procedures.

This new approach was demonstrated by separate UUP meetings with both Governments in the course of the afternoon/early evening; and while some areas of potential sensitivity were identified - particularly in relation to UUP expectations about the degree of comfort which might be incorporated in the Joint Statement, and the speed with which the decommissioning Bills might be progressed in the relevant legislatures - both Governments agreed that the initiative was worthy of encouragement. Overall, the day concluded on a more optimistic note than anyone could have anticipated at the commencement of proceedings.

Signed

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