



FROM: JULIE MAPSTONE  
IPL DIVISION  
6 SEPTEMBER 1996

cc PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B  
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B  
PS/PUS (L&B) - B  
PS/Sir David Fell - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Legge - B  
Mr Steele - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Leach - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Stephens - B  
Mr Hill - B  
Mr Lavery - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Beeton - B  
Mrs Collins - B  
Ms Bharucha - B  
Mr Whysall - B

*Handwritten notes:*  
DRC  
2/3 Mrs McN  
O/R  
Open Henry  
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PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) -B

TALKS: HMG OPENING STATEMENT

The minute from PS/Michael Ancram of 5 September asked for the removal of para 26, referring to Frameworks, from the Opening Statement circulated on 4 September. A copy with the relevant paragraph removed will be available at the Talks on Monday.

2. In discussion among officials however there is some concern about the prospect of there being no reference at all to Frameworks in the formal Opening Statement. The purpose of the reference as it stood was to give a brief historical note, merely acknowledging that we had published it, and was the most modest mention we would get away with.

3. If we don't volunteer a mention in the Statement, we may find we face less welcome consequences:

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- although the unionists will not like Frameworks mentioned in the Statement, the nationalists will be annoyed and suspicious if it isn't. The modest reference as it stood seems to strike the right balance;
- the advantage of a mention of Frameworks in the Opening Statement, is that we are more likely to be able to avoid further reference to it. If it's not there we will be continually asked about it.
- if we are pressed on it later, we may find it less easy to get away with the minimalist position of para 26.

4. On balance therefore our advice would be to retain a reference to Frameworks in the Opening Statement. As a suggestion, a slightly different formulation is offered (attached) which adds a sentence to the original paragraph, making it clear that there is no pre-determined outcome. This would be useful in making a mention of Frameworks more acceptable to unionists.

SIGNED

JULIE MAPSTONE



26. As part of this role, the Government published in February 1995, in "Frameworks for the Future", with appropriate parts agreed with the Irish Government, its view of what a possible comprehensive settlement might look like, based on its best assessment then of where broad agreement might be found. This was offered, not as a rigid blueprint to be imposed, but as an aid to discussion and negotiations. The Government reaffirms, as has been accepted by all participants, that neither this nor any negotiated outcome is either pre-determined or excluded in advance or limited by anything other than the need for agreement.

Mr Watkins  
Mr Stephens  
Mr Hill  
Mr Lavery  
Mr MacCabe  
Mr Beaton  
Mrs Collins  
Ms Sharucha  
Mr Whysell

PM/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&S) -B

TALKS: HMS OPENING STATEMENT  
HMS OPENING STATEMENT ON DECOMMISSIONING

I attach a revised version of the HMS opening statement for the opening plenary. This has been updated and amended from the version circulated on 10 June, and approved then by Ministers. Our handling plan aims for early deployment of such opening statements.

This Opening Statement is intended to be an orthodox account of HMS's approach to the negotiations. It does not, at this stage therefore, incorporate the 'warmer' language on the Union which has been put to the Prime Minister. That has yet to be approved by the Prime Minister and may be something which he would prefer to save for his own use.