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FROM: JULIE MAPSTONE
IPL
30 September 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 Steele - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Leach (B&L) - 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
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

File
Jm
2/10.

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

SUMMARY: TALKS, 30 SEPTEMBER, 7 PM

A rather low point. Indications from the UUP at the end of last week were that the joint proposal on decommissioning (the "conclusions" paper) was not acceptable. This was confirmed by receipt mid morning of the UUP's paper on decommissioning, which was published at a press conference at 2 pm.

The 3 main aspects to their position reported in the paper, all presented in uncompromising language are:

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- They return to the concept of actual decommissioning in advance of participation in negotiations;
- the paper introduces further conditions following a ceasefire before Sinn Fein can join the Talks; and
- it enhances the Verification Commission at the expense of a committee of the plenary.

Following their press conference, the UUP were reported in news bulletins as accusing the Government of wishing to "bury decommissioning".

A morning meeting with the Irish side, led by Mrs Owen, produced the inevitable gloom and hostility towards the UUP. Both Governments agreed that (a) the only realistic way forward now was a plenary address on the issue of decommissioning, and (b) that it was better if a long view was taken, allowing for all participants to reflect on the consequences of not finding a way around the impasse. The conservative party conference next week provided a useful respite, and the plenary address to decommissioning would therefore be scheduled for the week beginning 14 October.

At a bilateral with the UUP in the afternoon with Messrs Trimble, Taylor, Maginnis and Empey, the Secretary of State expressed his disappointment at the UUP's rejection of the joint proposal, stating again that the joint proposal was the two Governments' "last and best shot". The UUP were anxious to provide their reason, largely an inability to contemplate being in a committee with no means of securing an outcome, because the rule of sufficient consensus meant they could be outvoted by the Irish Government, the SDLP and Sinn Fein, if they were involved. Indications also were that they had come under considerable pressure both from within their party and from outside, notably from McCartney. Surprisingly however they regarded themselves as still in a negotiating position and were not happy about the issue going to plenary. The publication of the

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statement and their press conference are however difficult to square with retaining flexibility.

At the end of the day both governments published statements repeating their positions on decommissioning in response to the UUP paper.

(Signed)

J MAPSTONE

John Adams said in his reply to my letter that he had just met Adams. Adams' initial response to the question of the 'silly parties' was to say that he was not sure what he meant by 'silly parties'. He then said that he was not sure what he meant by 'silly parties'. He then said that he was not sure what he meant by 'silly parties'.

I said that I could not say whether we would wait for this before publication. We had concerns of the same kind about the possibility of leaks. Home acknowledged this, but said that he was sure there would be no leaks from their side. I also warned him against making any suggestion that we would agree to change the text. Home said he would not do this.

Home was relatively satisfied. Allowing for his natural optimism and desire to put the two sides on 'silly parties', my guess is that Adams' response was not as far off the mark. Meanwhile, the timetable for the first reply is under discussion in connection with the timing of publication. We will need to make a final decision on this by Wednesday night/Thursday morning at the latest.

I am copying this to the Policy Review Group.

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lister Esq
New Cross Central Office

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