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JA

FROM: J MAPSTONE
IPL
14 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 - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Stephens - B
Ms Bharucha - 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
JH 17/4.

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS: SUMMARY, 14 OCTOBER, 10.30PM.

Two themes for the day: the agenda for the opening plenary, and in the margins, Unionist pressure on the Government to redefine the entry requirements for Sinn Fein.

Agreement on the agenda for the opening plenary had been left with the UUP and the SDLP to pursue in bilaterals. The UUP reported in the

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morning that they were waiting for the SDLP to come back to them. A plenary convened at 12 noon as previously arranged but was adjourned at the Chairmen's call, to facilitate an expressed wish from some parties to continue with bilaterals. It was suggested the plenary reconvene at 2.30. In fact it did not reconvene until 6pm after it had become clear that, although the UUP and SDLP had reached agreement on a text, their attempts to reach agreement with other participants had failed. Notably, a bilateral between the SDLP and the DUP had reportedly ended in disarray.

At the evening plenary there was much protest from DUP and UKUP at the fact that they had not been involved in bilaterals on the agenda, that the proposed agenda was put forward by the Chairman although it was in fact the agreed text of the SDLP and UUP, and that there appeared to be an assumption that there was no need of debate. In sticking to their agreed text, the UUP demonstrated independence from the DUP and the UKUP and, in a bad-tempered session, were roundly abused as a result. Having failed to get an adjournment of the plenary on the issue until tomorrow, the DUP and UKUP appeared prepared for a long haul session. The plenary was continuing at the time of writing.

On the other issue, at an afternoon bilateral with the UUP (Messrs Trimble - for 5 minutes - Taylor and Empey), it was clear that the UUP is seeking to have the door closed on Sinn Fein's entry to the talks. Accepting the legislative constraints on the Government, they proposed the development of a set of criteria to provide a definition of unequivocal which would, in effect mean Sinn Fein would never come into the talks. As a result of last week's bomb attack, the UUP reported they would be unable to sit down with Sinn Fein should they enter; in reality they said, the talks process only had a future on the basis of Sinn Fein excluded, although it could not be phrased in this way. They acknowledged the difficulties of

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this position for the SDLP, and accepted the need to avoid language which would make the situation impossible for them. The sorts of criteria they mentioned included the wording of any announcement, a time-scale (six monthly reviews), and a complete end to punishment attacks.

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(Signed)

LOYALIST PRISONERS

JULIE MAPSTONE

As you will see from Peter Warrington's record, Lark pressed me in London also weighed in hard on this issue. This follows similar pressure from the Irish Government, from the UUP (Paisley's conversation with the Prime Minister last week) and most recently from Andrew Hunter, as I see from the press.

I am well aware of the difficulty of making concessions to the Loyalist prisoners, but I think this still needs to be looked at again, not least against the background of the delicate position we are now in over the Loyalist ceasefire. Are we absolutely sure there is nothing at all we can do, even if it is relatively marginal and only affects a few prisoners? The effect of a gesture could be disproportionate to its real significance. Even if we can do nothing, are we sure we have our arguments marshalled as well as they can be to convince others of the impossibility of movement on our part? I have deployed all the arguments on various occasions, but do not find my interlocutors convinced.

I would be grateful for any further thoughts you may have on this by end of play on Wednesday, 16 October.

I am copying this to William Eames (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Ian Peiley (Cabinet Office), Sir John Kerr in Washington and Veronica Shepherd in Dublin.

Yours sincerely



JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq.
Northern Ireland Office

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