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FROM: J McKERVILL
TALKS SECRETARIAT
1 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 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

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

SUMMARY: TALKS, 1 OCTOBER 1996

1. Little real progress. Most of day spent in plenary trying to reach agreement on agenda for remainder of opening plenary. Plenary resumes at noon tomorrow for further consideration of agenda. Joint conclusions paper on addressing decommissioning published at a press conference held by the Secretary of State.

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2. In a plenary session beginning at 11.10am, chaired by Prime Minister Holkeri, the records of previous plenary meetings, circulated by the Chairmen's staff, were agreed subject to objections raised by both the DUP and UKUP that the record of the meeting on 10 September did not include verbatim the Questions which the Secretary of State had posed to the loyalist parties in determining whether they had breached the Mitchell principles. Delegates also agreed the "Points of Agreement" on confidentiality as circulated by the Chairmen on 29 September.

3. The remainder of the morning was devoted to consideration of the agenda for the remainder of the opening plenary. After a rather pointless half hour, with the DUP and UKUP angry about their, and other parties', exclusions from the discussions which had involved the two Governments, the UUP and the SDLP on decommissioning, the plenary developed into an amicable if rather inconclusive debate. Towards the end, however, the atmosphere turned noticeably sour when Lord Alderdice deliberately and gratuitously questioned the DUP Deputy Leader's integrity. Refusing to withdraw his remarks, and after the Chairman invited resumption of the debate, the DUP delegation left the Conference room. The plenary adjourned at 1300 for two hours to allow delegates to pass to the Chairmen any additions/alterations/updated proposals for the remainder of the opening plenary. Any proposals, with the agreement of the individual party concerned, were to be circulated to all delegations for resumed discussion at 1500.

4. The afternoon plenary began at 1510 with Lord Alderdice agreeing to withdraw his earlier remarks. Debate then resumed on the agenda, focussing on the sequence in which the comprehensive agenda and decommissioning should be handled. A possible compromise approach floated by the Secretary of State seemed to have attractions to the other delegates. However, after a short adjournment at 1645 to allow circulation of a revised draft agenda

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for the remainder of the opening plenary, it became clear that agreement would not be achieved that day, the outstanding difficulty being the wording of the agenda item on decommissioning. Plenary adjourned at 1850 to allow all delegations to reflect further, with an agreement to resume at 1200 tomorrow.

(Signed)

J MCKERVILL

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