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FROM: D J R HILL
 Political Development Team
 8 October 1996

cc PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B
 PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B
 PS/Baroness Denton (L&B) - B
 PS/Mr Moss (L&B) - B
 PS/PUS (L&B) - B
 PS/Sir David Fell - B
 Mr Thomas - B
 Mr Steele - B
 Mr Bell - B
 Mr Watkins - B
 Mr Wood (L&B) - B
 Mr Stephens - B
 Mr Maccabe - B
 Mr Priestley - B
 Mr Perry - B
 Mr Ross, GIS, Castle Bldgs - B
 Mr Whysall - B
 Ms Mapstone - B
 Ms Bharucha - B
 Mr Lamont, RID - B
 HMA, Dublin - B
 Mr Clarke, Dublin - B
 Mr Westmacott, Washington - B
 Mr Oakden, No.10 - B
 Ms Collins, Cabinet Office - B

PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B

TALKS: SPEAKING NOTE FOR USE AT PLENARY, 8 OCTOBER 1996

I attach a draft speaking note on which the Secretary of State may care to draw at today's plenary session if the talks participants do wish to discuss the implications of yesterday's bombs at Thiepval Barracks.

The first part of the note is intended to constitute a call for the talks participants to re-dedicate themselves to the talks process and sets out the rationale for the talks process: it might be suitable for press release or briefing. The latter part of the speaking note (dealing with the Sinn Fein angle) is for "defensive" use against the probability that the issue will be raised. It seeks

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to keep the door open for Sinn Fein to enter the talks while underlining the need for any purported restoration of the 1994 ceasefire to be unequivocal by reference to the surrounding circumstances, not merely the wording of any statement.

(Signed) _____

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Political Development Team

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THIEPVAL BOMB: EFFECT ON TALKSPoints to MakeGeneral/Security

1. I do not underestimate the seriousness of this development. Our first concern must be for the immediate victims of this atrocity. I also join the spokesmen of all the main parties in urging the Loyalist Paramilitaries not to be provoked into breaking their ceasefire: that could only lead to a vicious circle of escalating terrorism.

2. Obviously there is a major enquiry underway as to how such an attack could be mounted. There is an enhanced level of security throughout the Province. The security forces will continue to defend the community with all the means at their disposal.

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3. This attack has caused people to question the value of the talks process as currently constituted.

4. In fact it underlines the need for a political process of this character - capable of addressing all the sources of political instability in Northern Ireland - and the need to make progress towards a broadly acceptable political settlement which could indeed provide the basis for a permanent peace.

5. I urge all my colleagues around the table to re-dedicate themselves to that task.

6. Let us just remind ourselves why we are here.

7. For its part the Government is determined to eradicate

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terrorism from Northern Ireland. That requires, as a minimum, a range of effective security measures. In our judgement the effectiveness of such measures is enhanced if they remain within the boundaries of internationally accepted standards of human and civil rights. The Government has made and will continue to make available to the Chief Constable whatever resources are reasonably required in proportion to the threat.

8. But we are also determined to eradicate the sources of terrorism. That means tackling economic and social deprivation and promoting a wide range of community relations policies and social policies intended to ensure equality of opportunity and parity of esteem.

9. Crucially it means tackling the political instability and uncertainty which have bedevilled Northern Ireland for so long. That instability and uncertainty have provided a deadly feeding ground for terrorist organisations on both sides who have used them as a justification, or rather as an excuse, for their murderous activities.

10. The objective of the political process is to remove that uncertainty and develop political stability in Northern Ireland.

11. A functioning political accommodation between the two main parts of the community in Northern Ireland would heal many of the sources of inter-communal tension. It would make it easier to promote economic and social developments from which benefits would flow throughout society in Northern Ireland. It would demonstrate that there is no shred of justification for politically - motivated terrorism in Northern Ireland; and create a situation in which the whole society could stand resolutely together in opposing the men of violence.

12. This political process in which we are engaged has the capacity to deliver those benefits. That capacity is not diminished by the events of yesterday.

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13. We have around the table representatives of the whole spectrum of political opinion in Northern Ireland, apart from those who have excluded themselves by their demonstrable lack of commitment to democratic methods. With the two Governments, the parties are in a position to address all the issues of concern to them - including those issues, like the nature of the relationship between the two Governments, which go beyond the boundaries of Northern Ireland. The breadth of the issues which can be raised in these talks maximises the chances of securing an outcome which is, on balance, acceptable to both parts of the community in Northern Ireland. The arrangements for chairing these negotiations, and our agreed rules of procedure, offer reassurance that our discussions are not biased in any one direction. No outcome is either pre-determined or excluded in advance, or limited by anything other than the need for agreement.

We should re-dedicate ourselves to realising the potential of these talks, rather than bowing to the agenda which those who carried out yesterday's attack are trying to set.

Sinn Fein Participation (Defensive)

15. I have consistently made clear that in my judgement this political process would be strengthened if it included Sinn Fein. These talks could then lead directly to a political settlement and the total decommissioning of the main terrorist organisations. But Sinn Fein's participation will require an unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire.

16. Obviously I hope there will be a restoration of the ceasefire. Any further IRA terrorism would be morally reprehensible and politically inept. It would achieve nothing except great misery and a greater legacy of mutual fear and distrust: an even higher obstacle to the reconciliation between the two parts of the community in Northern Ireland which Sinn Fein professes to seek.

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17. We do not at this stage know for sure which organisation carried out yesterday's attack. But if it was the IRA it provides further evidence that the Republican Movement as a whole is not ready to abandon the Armalite and rely on the ballot box. Perhaps they fear that they will not succeed in advancing their objectives by relying on purely political means: but that is the price which must be paid if they want to participate in a democratic process, and in any event they will not succeed in advancing their aims by the use of terrorism either.

18. If the IRA did carry out yesterday's appalling atrocity, then any purported restoration of the IRA ceasefire would be viewed with very great suspicion by the people of Northern Ireland. A declared restoration of the ceasefire at this time would lack all credibility. The Governments' test is that the restoration of the ceasefire should be 'unequivocal'. I have made clear before, that this would need to be tested by reference to the wording of any statement and assessed in the light of events on the ground and all the relevant circumstances. Certainly, if the IRA did carry out yesterday's attack then any purported restoration of the ceasefire in current circumstances would lack all credibility.

19. The door remains open to Sinn Fein if the Republican Movement has the courage to abandon terrorism and can convince us by their words and actions that they really have done so. Otherwise, the talks will proceed without them.

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