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Talks
Handling Plan
file

FROM: D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
11 September 1996

✓ McMan

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) cc PS/Michael Ancram (B&L)
PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Leach (B)
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Steele
Mr Wood (B&L)
Mr Stephens
Mr Lavery
Mr Maccabe
Mr Perry
Mr Priestly
Mr Whysall (B&L)
Ms Mapstone
Ms Bharucha
Mr Campbell Bannerman
Mr Lamont, RID
HMA, Dublin
Mr Clarke, Dublin
Ms Collins, Cabinet Office *

* via IPL

TALKS, 11 SEPTEMBER

1. The two Governments need to finalise and present their determination of the DUP representation against the loyalist parties; but our priority should be to get the Irish Government/UUP discussions back on track and consider ways of heading off or minimising the impact of the Alliance representations against the unionist parties.

Timing

2. Senator Mitchell has sought a meeting at 9 am and will want advice on when to summon the plenary. Mr Spring hopes to be back by late morning (after Cabinet). To allow time to deal with the points mentioned in the next two paragraphs and to finalise the draft "judgement" it may be best to aim for plenary not before, say, 12 noon.

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Irish Government/UUP discussions

3. A short early meeting with the UUP might be desirable, to impress on Mr Trimble that he is at some risk of losing the potential gains of 9 September.

Alliance representations

4. Are there any further levers we could pull? Mr Ashdown, the Prime Minister? A joint approach from Messrs Hume and Trimble? Having a recent procedural precedent and bearing in mind unionist concerns to set appropriate precedents for any future representations against Sinn Fein there seems little future in asking the Chairman to consider procedural delays.

The judgement

5. We may need to take account of Mr Gleeson's views and Irish official suggestions that the draft should be considerably shorter - concentrating on the last two pages.

6. HOLAB also advise against including paragraphs 4-6 and some other parts of the draft: Mr Whysall has the details.

7. Additional points which occur to me on re-reading the draft

- the important contextual point about the continued existence of the CLMC ceasefire has lost its emphasis;
- the key political point covered in paragraph 11 may need to be put more clearly and decisively;

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- although it may not be sensible to use the phrase "sufficient consensus" it might strengthen the Governments' position to point out (after paragraph 9) that the parties' views suggest there is no consensus on how to proceed.

7. This reinforces the case for deferring any plenary until at least late morning.

(Signed)

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