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PA

FROM: Q THOMAS
DUS (L)
15 October 1996

cc: PS/Secretary of State (B&L) -B
PS/Sir J Wheeler (B&L) -B
PS/PUS (B&L) -B
PS/Sir David Fell -B
Mr Bell -B
Mr Steele -B
Mr Watkins -B
Mr Beeton -B
Mr Priestly -B
Mr Hill (B&L) -B
Mr Lavery -B
Mr MacCabe -B
Mr Stephens -B
Mr Perry -B
Ms Collins, Ca Off via IPL -B
Mr Lamont, RID -B
HMA Dublin -B

PS/MICHAEL ANCRAM (B&L) - B

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR SINN FEIN'S ENTRY

It is clear that we need to focus increasingly on the precise terms for Sinn Fein's entry into the talks. There have been signs that the Irish side would accept some clarification (Mr O'hUiginn for example has mentioned a four to six week moratorium before entry) and Miss Soderberg has canvassed three months.

It is likely that Irish Government and SDLP acquiescence in such an exercise would depend on an assurance that we will work, in the context of the Hume/Adams initiative, to provide a route for Sinn Fein to join the process. The UUP by contrast have been explicit that they see the terms and conditions of entry issue as effectively guaranteeing Sinn Fein's exclusion.

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As we discussed if we are to have a new formulation it may be convenient to see it in terms of additional wording in the Hume/Adams text. In any event if we were to proceed with that initiative we should want to make sure that it reflected our latest thinking so that we were sending inconsistent messages.

With that in mind I have produced the attached cockshy. There would be consequential amendments to the existing text.

(Signed)
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The prospects for success in these negotiations will obviously be much greater if they take place in a peaceful environment. Under the legislation setting up the talks, if there was an unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire of August 1994, Sinn Fein would be invited to nominate a team to join the negotiations at that stage. [We would of course need to be sure that any restoration was indeed unequivocal.] In the light of recent events, neither the British nor the Irish Government believe that, unless there were some incontrovertible developments supporting it, a dependable judgment that the restoration was indeed genuinely unequivocal could be formed in less than three months. In forming their judgment in that period the two Governments would consider whether words, actions and all the circumstances were consistent with the declared ceasefire. [For example whether or not any paramilitary activity, including surveillance, targetting and weapons preparation, continued would influence the establishment of confidence that the ceasefire was unequivocal.] Beyond the unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire, the British and Irish Governments are agreed that these negotiations are without preconditions.

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