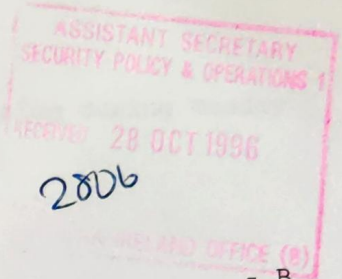


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FROM: D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
28 OCTOBER 1996



cc: PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas (L&B) - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Lavery - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Perry - B
✓ Mr Priestly - B
Mr Whysall - B
Ms Mapstone - B
Mr Lamont, RID - B
HMA Dublin - B
Mr Clarke, Dublin - B
Ms Collins (Cab Office)

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

TALKS: POSSIBLE MEETING WITH THE UUP

As flagged in the "gameplan" for this week which I circulated on 25 October it is possible that the UUP, especially if Mr Trimble is back on the scene, will seek a meeting with the British side to explore a range of current issues. A checklist of items which might arise is attached.

2. Most of these have been pretty well signalled in recent media reports, in remarks made by Unionist MPs during the Debate on the Loyal Address and in Friday's debate at the Forum.

3. We might discuss whether there would be some advantage in seeking a meeting with the UUP at a convenient opportunity, to establish their up to date position on these various issues. But I am

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circulating this note now in case they seek a meeting during Monday morning.

(signed)

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POINTS WHICH THE UUP MAY RAISE

1. Rumours of "frantic" behind the scenes activity to bring about another ceasefire;
 - the focus of media stories seems to be on Irish and American activity, but the UUP may want a cross bearing from us;
 - Mr Trimble may wonder where we have got to with the draft statement the Secretary of State described to him some weeks ago.
2. How soon and under what conditions could Sinn Fein join the talks?
 - Mr Spring has at least implied that it could not happen immediately, but the UUP will want to consolidate the more negative formula used by the Prime Minister in the Debate on the Loyal Address;
 - today's (Irish Times) reports of a difference of view on this point between London and Dublin may prompt the UUP to re-register their views with us.
3. The handling of decommissioning in the talks
 - given the two previous points, the UUP will no doubt wish to make clear that the 30 September paper represents their absolute bottom line.

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4. Handling the debate on decommissioning/role of the Business Committee

- we are not yet in a position to offer a potential exit from the likely impasse on decommissioning, but can look ahead to a fairly measured exchange and exploration of views.
- as to the Business Committee we are sympathetic to the Unionist view that a meeting would be helpful, but equally not ready to press for one against the wishes of others.

5. Preparations for decommissioning: Bill and Commission

- the UUP may seek reaffirmation that the Bill will be introduced and enacted before Christmas. It might be prudent - while confirming a readiness to introduce the Bill - to point out the Parliamentary handling could be affected by the pace of progress in the talks, and to remind the UUP that the Bill can only be an enabling bill and that real progress will require agreement among all relevant parties on a scheme of decommissioning;
- the same point could be made about the Independent Commission. It cannot be established on a definitive basis without prior agreement on a scheme of decommissioning. It could also be worth re-emphasising the significance of the two Governments' readiness to appoint "independent experts of international standing" forthwith, which could well amount to an "inchoate" Commission.

6. The Northern Ireland Grand Committee

- The UUP may be keen to build on the Prime Minister's conference speech and make rapid progress towards implementation of the proposed changes, including in connection with the PES statement in early December.

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Ministers may, however, wish to emphasise that the proposals have been issued for consultation.

7. The position of the Northern Ireland section in the Queen's speech

- without giving any commitment, Ministers could reassure the UUP that their point has been duly noted.

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