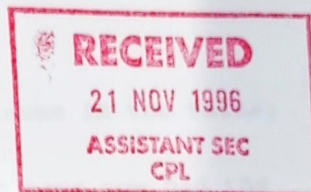


CPL1/24857

FROM: ANITA BHARUCHA
IPL DIVISION
20 NOVEMBER 1996



cc PS/PUS (L&B)
Mr Stephens
Mr Hill
Mr Beeton
Mr White
Ms Mapstone

- B
- B
- B
- B
- B

LDC
ANRS mcn

CABINET BRIEF: 21 NOVEMBER 1996

I attach a brief for tomorrow's Cabinet, which is necessarily incomplete as the Secretary of State will also wish to report on the outcome of this evening's IGC. A security brief is at Annex A.

(SIGNED):

A BHARUCHA

Ext 6503

CT/TPU/2634

Talks

- discussion of decommissioning continues in the talks;
- all the parties and the governments have now had the opportunity to present their ideas, question each other and submit further papers;
- discussion has this week mainly been via bilaterals, including between the SDLP and UUP;
- signs that, for the UUP decommissioning is increasingly linked to conditions of entry for Sinn Fein;
- a possible exit strategy for decommissioning may be an international commission and liaison committee of the talks operating in parallel. This is at an early stage of discussion with some of the talks participants.

Conditions of entry for Sinn Fein (if asked)

- would take as much time as necessary to judge whether any ceasefire was genuinely unequivocal, and would take into account all circumstances including events on the ground;
- no question of the IRA declaring a ceasefire one day and Sinn Fein walking into the talks the next.

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

- constructive IGC on evening of 20 November;
- taken up, inevitably, with continuation of discussion on political issues;

- focussed mainly on conditions of entry for Sinn Fein and the way forward on decommissioning;

- [outcome].

Manchester Speech, 15 November

- used part of address to Manchester Luncheon Club on 15 November to challenge statements made by Martin McGuinness the previous evening;
- useful opportunity to restate on overall policy publicly.

Loyalists

- the Prime Minister met representatives of Loyalist parties on 20 November;
- we continue to praise their restraint in maintaining their ceasefire;
- meeting will have shown them again the gains to be achieved from remaining within the political process;
- the Prime Minister was able to say that, in the light of the strong representations received, certain regime changes, which will apply across the board, can be made;
- these can be introduced shortly (depending on events on the ground) - for example increasing the Christmas home leave allowance to 10 days (from 7) for prisoners who have served over 11 years.