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FROM: PAUL MURPHY MP
Minister of State
10 November 1997

Dear Tony,
Thought it would be
helpful to see this - pre-
Trimble meeting. It would
help if you & I could have
a chat afterwards +
Paul M. Hope that's
pamible Mo x

SECRETARY OF STATE

UNIONISTS AND THE TALKS

I thought it useful if I were to put together a few thoughts on the UUP and their position in the Talks process. They still do not engage with Sinn Fein, either directly or indirectly, although last week, there was a type of indirect engagement. The forthcoming intensive consultation, involving bilaterals, will mean that any possibility of engagement is even less. When Adams and McGuinness met us last week, you will remember they were stressing the lack of UUP engagement in the process, as much as with them as a party.

There is something in this - the UUP papers are very thin and they think the "real game" is outside the Talks process.

Our meeting with David Trimble last week could have been worse. There is little doubt, in my mind, that bilaterals will suit them; even though they blame the SDLP for not doing enough to arrange them and themselves blame the UUP. I will do my best to encourage this new Talks structure, with the other parties - specially the Alliance and the Women's Coalition - acting as useful mediators.

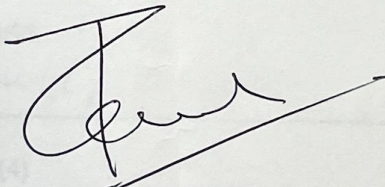
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Additionally, I am going to spend a good deal of time this and next week with moderate UUP players - (like Jeffrey Donaldson, Reg Empey and Dermot Nesbitt, to find out more about UUP intentions).

Any North-South body (or bodies), need to be seen in an overall East-West context, together with changes to Articles 2 and 3, if the Unionists are to have anything to do with it. The Irish (and the SDLP) need to understand this at all times, and we will press them on this. I also firmly believe if we concentrate on the economic and social benefits to Northern Ireland people as a result of sensible North-South arrangements, we will be on firmer ground. And, any such institution must be genuinely two-way.

I will keep you up-to-date on developments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Murphy', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

PAUL MURPHY MP
Minister of State

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