

CONFIDENTIAL

TALKS: HANDLING PLAN FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING 15 DECEMBER

FROM: Mr V E Sutherland, HMA Dublin  
DATE: 12 December 1997

- cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
- PS/Mr Murphy (L&B)
- PS/Mr Ingram (L&B)
- PS/PUS (L&B)
- PS/Mr Semple
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Steele
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Leach
- Mr Bell
- Mr Stephens
- Mr Brooker
- Mr Ferguson
- Mr Perry
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Beeton
- Mr Priestly
- Mr Woods (L&B)
- Mr Whysall
- Mr Dickinson
- Ms Mapstone
- Ms Bharucha
- Mr Warner
- Mr Travis
- Mr Fergusson, RID
- HMA Dublin
- Mr Cary, W'ton via RID
- Mr Holmes, No 10
- Mr Sanderson, Cab Off
- Mr P Britton Cab Off

file 100/142

cc: J O'Connell Esq, PS/Sec, HLO  
Mr Richard Wilson KC, PUS, HMA  
Mr Ian Paddy, Cabinet Office  
Mr Ken Lundy, PS/Sec, HLO

By BA/BK/ED/MS

Re: HMA, PS/No 10

MEMORANDUM WITH THE DEBATE

1. Thank you for copying to me your letter of 11 December 1997 to Ken Lundy.
2. I agree that the main subject raised were those relating to Tim Dalton's intervention, not least because of the Irish side.
3. Tim Dalton said that negotiations on both sides were undoubtedly very difficult indeed, but that nevertheless an agreement on the basis of confidence had been reached. However, three other items which were not covered by the agreement nevertheless derailed it. These were: prisoners, the IRA, and the British side. Tim Dalton said that he thought it was unlikely that these three issues were tackled in parallel. He said that much work had been done, but wondered whether the two governments should devote even more attention to them?
4. Personally, I found the dinner enjoyable and the discussion generally constructive. But I came away reinforced in the view that Strand II remains a formidable problem. Irish aspirations are clearly beyond what Unionists will find acceptable. I was reminded of the response made by Ed Malone, editor of the Belfast Telegraph, some months ago to my question as to whether it was realistic to expect a solution next year. He said he doubted it; he feared that what happened in the 1970s would happen again, namely that the Nationalists would require more in the way of North/South bodies than the Unionists could tolerate.
5. I am including Richard Wilson in the copy addresses on account of the prisoners point.

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Version Numbered  
Approved

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