

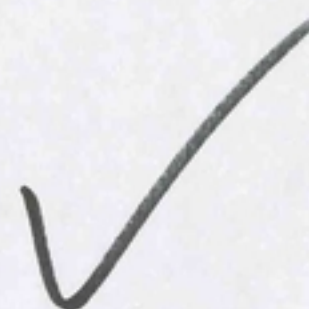
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FROM: QUENTIN THOMAS
Political Director
29 October 1997
ID/251

cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Ingram (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Semple
Mr Steele
Mr Leach
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Stephens
Mr Woods (L&B)
Mr Beeton
Mr Brooker
Mr Hill
Mr Ferguson, Cent Sec
Mr Maccabe
Mr Priestly
Mr Whysall
Mr Sanderson, Cabinet Office (via IPL)
Mr Fergusson, RID, FCO (via IPL)
HMA Dublin
Mr Warner
Mr Cooke, Cabinet Office (via IPL)
Mr Holmes, No.10 (via Ms Rebello)



Prime Minister (4)
A thoughtful piece,
which you might like
to see, not least in
the light of your
discussions with the
SDP earlier this
evening. JH
29/10.

PS/Mr Murphy

POLITICAL TALKS: THE STATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

I thought it might be helpful to offer some reflections on where the negotiations have reached so far.

As was brought out in the Business Committee meeting this morning, there is a shared frustration that the participants have not yet fully engaged. (Some of those present expressed this in terms of an "impasse" - but most readily agreed that the real problem was a different one: namely lack of engagement, perhaps especially from the UUP, so far.)

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My own sense of this is that most of the participants have in common that they have confined themselves at this stage to setting out their opening positions, positions from which they will no doubt retreat during negotiations, and yet are demanding that others should instantly reveal their bottom line! Unsurprisingly no party has been ready to start putting its cards on the table unilaterally.

In spite of all this some of the preliminary skirmishes have given us some idea of the elements of a possible deal. I prepared the attached paper with my own current analysis which I thought others might be interested to see.

(Quentin Thomas)

QUENTIN THOMAS

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