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B/s

From: JOHN MCKERVILL
20 November 1996

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
PS/Malcolm Moss (DHSS, DOE&L) - B
PS/Baroness Denton (DED, DANI&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas (B&L) - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mr Priestly - B
Mr Hill (B&L) - B
Mr Lavery - B
Mr Maccabe - B (File)
Mr Perry - B
Ms Bharucha - B
Ms Mapstone - B
Mr Whysall (B&L) - B
Ms Collins, Cab Off (via IPL) - B
Mr Dickinson, TAU - B
Mr Lamont, RID FCO - B
HMA Dublin - B
Mr Westmacott (via RID) - B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B
Mrs McNally (B&L) - B
Mr Holmes, No 10

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS: 20 NOVEMBER 1996: SUMMARY, 1630

A relatively quiet day at Castle Buildings as Ministers prepared for this evening's Anglo-Irish Conference and the Secretary of State returned to London for meetings at No 10.

2. At 1130 hrs the Chairmen held a meeting with the two Government delegations. Despite expectations that General de Chastelain might have requested the meeting in order to pass on his thoughts about handling the decommissioning issue, this did not happen. Rather, the meeting ended up being an inconclusive discussion on whether the talks had come to the stage when they needed to be saved. Most agreed that we were close to that point, if not quite there yet.

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Much rested on whether the UUP were prepared to budge on their decommissioning proposals. Prime Minister Holkeri urged the two Governments at the IGC to present as common a front as possible - in his experience when both worked together closely, results were achieved. The meeting ended with agreement that a plenary should be held at noon on Monday 25 November for reports on bilaterals.

3. At 1245 hrs Michael Ancram met an SDLP delegation, led by Sean Farren, who wished to report on their meeting the previous day with the UUP. At that meeting the UUP had acknowledged that 'entry conditions' were not an appropriate subject for their dialogue with the SDLP (although we were assured that it was not off their agenda for discussion with HMG) and so both sides focussed on item 2(c) of the agenda. They schematically began to sketch out, without conclusion, the basic sets of relationships: ie the remit of the Committee; its relationship with the Commission; and the Commission's relationship to the two Governments. A further meeting would take place that afternoon.

4. Michael Ancram noted that the SDLP believed the discussions were moving in a more positive direction and looked forward to a further report from the SDLP. We had sought a meeting with the UUP, without success, ostensibly because the UUP were involved in the bilaterals. The SDLP however used the meeting with the Minister to put down a marker that a firm condition in reaching agreement on item 2(c) would be agreement to move rapidly through item 3 to item 4 (launch of three-stranded negotiations). The Minister said that he would not disagree with the SDLP on that.

[signed JMCK]

J MCKERVILL
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