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FROM: A J WHYSALL
3 December 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
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
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

1. Julie 4/12
2. J 4/12
3PA

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS: SUMMARY, 3 DECEMBER 1996

A day of modest promise.

The Chairman, having considered Mr McCartney's proposition and the Party's papers on it submitted yesterday, ruled to the effect that while each participant had a right to raise any issue and be heard, that did not include a right to have a vote held - whether a proposition was voted on was a matter for the participants. Consequently, Mr McCartney had no right to insist that his motion on decommissioning (drafted either to recruit the UUP to a hard line,

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or embarrass them by having to vote against it) should not be put immediately to the vote. This was the subject of lengthy commentary by Mr McCartney, who constructed the argument that in consequence, while the question of the Union could be raised in the Talks, the holding of a vote about its maintenance could forever be blocked by the SDLP or Irish (since without them there would be no sufficient consensus). Dr Paisley took up this line, and delivered a lengthy, uncompromising and splenetic denunciation of it.

Senator Mitchell then proposed that the Independent Chairmen should conduct bilaterals with the parties, with a view to finding a way forward on decommissioning that might achieve agreement. Finding a large measure of support, adjourned the plenary until 12.00 on Tuesday.

In the first such bilateral, the Chairmen called on the Secretary of State. We took them through our possible compromise on decommissioning, drawing attention to the surprisingly modest adaptations proposed by the UUP (Mr Maginnis' paper of last night). Senator Mitchell appeared to be cheered by the prospect he saw in our paper for arriving at a way forward, undertaking to keep in touch in the light of his bilaterals with other parties.

Signed:

A J WHYSALL