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FROM: PS/PUS
14 NOVEMBER 1996

- cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
- PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B
- PS/Sir David Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Steele - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Leach - B
- Mr Stephens - B
- Mr Wood (L&B) - B
- Mr Hill - B
- Mr Perry - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- HMA Dublin - B
- Mr Lamont, RID - B
- Ms Bharucha - B
- Mr Holmes, No 10

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH TED BARRINGTON: 14 NOVEMBER 1996

The Irish Ambassador telephoned PUS this afternoon to pass what he called the Irish side's 'very negative reaction' to the paper which had been passed over earlier. He said that Dublin were particularly concerned that:

- the paper was apparently predicated on an acceptance of the Unionist argument that both Dublin and the SDLP could block process in the sub-committee;
- the proposed Verification Commission would be given inappropriate powers to make what was properly a political judgement when any role for such a body should be confined to addressing technical matters;
- the paramilitaries just would not agree to it.

2. Mr Barrington then went on to ask about the status of the paper. Was it HMG's proposal that it should be an agreed paper or would HMG "go solo" with it?

3. In reply PUS said the paper had been drafted in an attempt to get the UUP on board but he stressed that it was still possible for HMG to take on board further drafting points which the Irish side might wish to put forward. There was no question of any

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Verification Commission being asked to take decisions which belonged to the talks community as a whole. It would be for the former to offer a view to the political parties and for them to make any final decisions concerns decommissioning.

4. PUS went on to explain that the paper was a balancing exercise in order to try and get the Unionists off their two hooks viz. that some decommissioning had to take place prior to the launch of the three strands and that there had to be agreement to a schedule of decommissioning. The draft attempted to provide the Commission with a degree of moral authority as to when decommissioning should begin but there was no guarantee, of course, that the Unionists would find it acceptable.

5. PUS continued to stress again that this was a matter which both sides should discuss further, and the conversation concluded with him underlining that he believed that the paper had much merit in it and that he hoped that the Irish side would not rush to too hasty a conclusion in their consideration of it.

Clive Barbour

CLIVE BARBOUR
PRIVATE SECRETARY
14 NOVEMBER 1996

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