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FROM: J MCKERVILL  
Political Affairs Division  
26 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  
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

File  
27/11

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS 26 NOVEMBER 1996: SUMMARY

A day of bilaterals but little progress as the Hume/Adams spectre hangs over proceedings. Both the Alliance Party and the SDLP gave Michael Ancram accounts of the previous day's trilateral with the UUP. The Alliance believed it was positive that the meeting had taken place at all. It was too early to say whether progress could be made. Much turned on whether the UUP were intent in getting to the launch of the three-stranded negotiations. While Alliance had detected a sense of realism creeping into UUP thinking on decommissioning, whether the UUP would eventually break with the DUP

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and UKUP on the need for decommissioning was far from clear. The Alliance Party, as did the PUP later, registered concern that little progress was likely to be achieved while Hume/Adams hung in the air. The bilateral with the SDLP focussed virtually on the previous day's bilateral. Some progress, they said, had been achieved, although they remained sceptical of the UUP's intentions.

A discussion with the Irish delegation before lunch also centered on UUP intentions and whether their published proposals on decommissioning represented their bottom line. An inconclusive discussion on the role of the core Commission revealed signs that the Irish were beginning to turn their minds towards giving it a more political role than they had up to now envisaged, though falling short of giving it a judgement calling responsibility. Both delegations agreed that they would support a further adjournment of plenary the next day if requested by the UUP/SDLP/Alliance Parties.

Immediately after lunch, the Minister held a meeting with the PUP who were concerned about the UUP's room for manoeuvre in the run up to an election. They believed the UUP could not break from the UKUP and DUP, which brought the loyalist parties' continued presence in the talks into some danger. That, coupled with uncertainty about Hume/Adams made them uneasy, with a final plea that they should not be taken for granted.

Plenary resumes at 1100 tomorrow.

Signed:

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