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a Mr Han [Signature]
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FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
15 MAY 1991

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
PS/Minister of State (L&B) - B
PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Pilling - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Cooke - B
Mr McNeill - B
Mr Pope - B

MR D J R HILL - B

POLITICAL TALKS: REPORTING ON THE OUTCOME OF THE PRIME
MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE UNIONIST LEADERS

In the Secretary of State's absence (giving TV interviews),
Dr Mawhinney spoke to Dr Alderdice and then Mr Hume to report on
the outcome of the meeting between the Unionist leaders and the
Prime Minister.

Dr Alderdice

2. Dr Mawhinney rang Dr Alderdice at about 5.30 pm. He said
that the meeting with the Prime Minister had taken longer than
anticipated, but there was nothing particular to be read into
this. The Unionists had stated their position at some length to
the Prime Minister. They had indicated that they thought that
the paper of 14 May also affected the Strand 1 discussions. This
subject was explored at length, until they accepted that it dealt
with Strands 2 and 3. The problem had been that as the paper had
been cleared with the Irish government, the Unionists perceived
some Irish government involvement in Strand 1. They had given
notice that they would wish to raise Articles 2 and 3.

3. Continuing, Dr Mawhinney said that the Unionists were also
worried about the international Chairman proposal having
implications for international adjudication in respect of
Northern Ireland. It was explained to them that this was not the

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case; the Chairman of Strand 2 was there to facilitate and not adjudicate. Hearing this message from the Prime Minister had obviously reassured the Unionists. They then said that they could not be committed to an unknown Chairman, as they would not be a party to his appointment. It had been pointed out to them that they would be consulted and that a Chairman to which they actively objected was hardly likely to be appointed. They also wanted to know what the "Standing Orders" would be for the Chairman, and precisely where in Northern Ireland Strand 2 would take place. However, the Unionists had accepted in principle that they would "work the document" subject to these three issues being resolved in due time.

4. Concluding, Dr Mawhinney said that as the Unionists had not given an unqualified acceptance, the intention was to consult the other parties about their willingness to proceed on this basis.

5. Dr Alderdice asked whether the Secretary of State would be back in Northern Ireland tomorrow. Dr Mawhinney replied that he was unsure how the consultation would take place. One possibility would be to use the VCR facility. Dr Alderdice indicated that he would be content with this.

6. Continuing, Dr Alderdice said that the Unionists appeared to have "accepted but not accepted" the document. This was a difficult position. Dr Mawhinney said that the Secretary of State had sought to preserve the position of the Alliance Party and others. The Unionists' acceptance was clearly qualified whereas the others had been unqualified and Dr Alderdice would be contacted again the following day.

Mr Hume

7. Dr Mawhinney got through to Mr Hume at 5.50 pm. He explained that the meeting with the Prime Minister had lasted for longer than had been anticipated. There was no significance in this, it was largely generosity on the Prime Minister's part: the Prime Minister had taken the view that important matters were being

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discussed and that it would be wrong to rush them. The Unionists had made some general comments about the paper that they had been given the day before. They were concerned that this paper addressed Strand 1 as well as Strand 2 and 3 (Mr Hume interjected "they can't read then!") because the document had been cleared, or parts of it discussed, with the Irish government. This represented the involvement of the Irish government in Strand 1 where they were not supposed to be participating - hence the reference to the ongoing Anglo-Irish Agreement in the Unionists' statement issued at lunch-time that day. They had been reassured on this point. On Articles 2 and 3, the Unionists had made clear that they would raise this robustly during Strand 2.

8. Continuing, Dr Mawhinney said that the Unionists were also concerned by the International Chairman that was proposed, as this implied international adjudication. The Prime Minister had assured them that it was not a question of adjudication but appointing an independent Chairman to provide a basis for facilitation. This was necessary because the Unionists were not prepared to have an Irish Chairman of any meetings in Strand 2, and the Irish Government - and perhaps the SDLP - were not prepared to have the Secretary of State as Chairman. The Unionists had said that they would not accept an independent Chairman without knowing whom it would be, and his background. They therefore wished to be involved in the choice of Chairman. It was made clear to them that the decision was for the two governments. However, they would be consulted, as would the other parties, and it was unrealistic to think that the two governments would choose somebody who was not in any way acceptable to one of the parties. The Unionists' second specific concern relating to the Standing Orders that would govern the operation of Strand 2; they pointed out that there had after all been some prior discussions on the operation of Strand 1. Thirdly, they had made it clear that location within Northern Ireland was important to them, and they wanted to know precisely where the second Strand would take place. They were, however, willing to accept in principle what was proposed subject to the three points Dr Mawhinney had mentioned, and "would work the document".

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9. Concluding, Dr Mawhinney said that as the Unionists' position did not represent an unqualified acceptance, the other parties would have to be consulted to see whether they would be prepared to proceed on the basis of what amounted to a form of qualified acceptance. The Secretary of State would therefore be in touch to see whether Mr Hume and the others would be content to proceed on that basis.

10. Mr Hume asked whether the outstanding issues would be agreed before Monday. Dr Mawhinney replied that none would be agreed prior to Monday. Mr Hume commented that he would need to think about the situation. Dr Mawhinney said that the Secretary of State would want to talk to Mr Hume, and perhaps present a more considered view than was possible at present.

Signed.

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