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FROM HEAD OF BRITISH SIDE OF ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT

TO HEAD OF IRISH SIDE

POLITICAL TALKS: INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN FOR STRAND TWO

We were grateful for the Irish side's acceptance, at the meetings on 7 and 10 June, of the urgency of pressing ahead with finding an independent chairman for Strand Two who would be acceptable to all the talks participants. When we met, you and your colleagues again explained the advantages which you saw in having an independent chairman who was not resident in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. You also drew attention to the fact that the two lists of names put forward by the Unionist parties had included names drawn from outside these islands, and especially from the Old Commonwealth.

For reasons with which you are familiar, the British side has consistently taken the view that there are strong arguments in the other direction in favour of looking to somebody from within these islands to take on this task. For your part you explained that, while you had at an earlier stage proposed the names of Lord Carrington and Lord Whitelaw, the Irish side had returned to its original view that a Chairman from outside these islands would be preferable.

We have reported on the meetings of last Friday and this

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Monday to the Secretary of State, who has consulted his colleagues. Having taken full and careful account of the points which you put to us, the Government would now like to propose, in order of priority, the following list of names:

Sir Ninian Stephen, the former Governor General of Australia.

Lord Carr of Hadley, the former Conservative Cabinet Minister.

Mr Geoffrey Palmer, the Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1989 to 1990.

Baroness Warnock, the Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge.

Sir Patrick Neill, the Warden of All Souls College, Oxford.

The Hon Roy McMurtry, Canadian High Commissioner in the UK from 1985 to 1988.

Biographical details are enclosed.

We have also considered very carefully the last two New Zealand High Commissioners, Bryce Harland and Bill Young. Neither would, we think, quite fit the bill. After careful consideration we do not believe that Bryce Harland has the right personal qualities. Bill Young is now 77 and rather old for the task. We have also looked very carefully at your other suggestion from Monday, Max Jakobson. He is a clever, distinguished and well-regarded Finn, but our Ambassador in Helsinki is not sure that he has sufficient relevant experience for the job to make him a front runner. His career after his time at the UN has not involved much call for Chairmanship skills or other relevant experience.

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As you know, the Secretary of State has invited Mr Collins to meet him in London later this week. He regards it as essential to emerge from that meeting with agreed names, preferably at least four in order of priority, and then to discuss how to proceed in a way which will also ensure that Strand 1 plenaries begin on 17 June. He also hopes to discuss other talks-related issues with Mr Collins. If the Irish Government were able to indicate in advance of that meeting whether it could on the basis of this letter accept any of these names, the Secretary of State would find that extremely helpful. The Secretary of State has asked me specifically to convey his hope that the readiness of the British side to show flexibility and relax its position by proposing some non-British names will lead the Irish side to consider very carefully the case for including in any agreed shortlist some of the names from within these islands suggested by the British side. The list proposed above is subject to the proviso that the Secretary of State would wish to consider the overall balance of any shortlist to be agreed between the two Governments.

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STEPHEN, THE RT HON SIR NINIAN (MARTIN) AK GCMG GCVO KBE

Australian. Potentially a good candidate if he is free to take on the Chairmanship. A historian and lawyer with talents for Chairmanship, no evident biases (he has avoided becoming involved in politics) and an interest in constitutional questions.

Former Governor-General of Australia (1982-89).

Born 15 June 1923 in Scotland, Scotch College, Melbourne and Melbourne University (LLB).

Barrister and solicitor Victoria 1949 (Victoria Bar 1951). An Honorary Master of the Bench of Gray's Inn. Appointed Governor-General in July 1982.

An able and sensitive man. After his admission to the Bar in 1951 he became known for his grasp of the finer points of property law.

Unpretentious. His period as Governor-General did much to restore the prestige of that office. He aroused virtually no controversy or criticism, and retired with a great deal of respect for the capable, unassuming way in which he exercised his duties.

The Australian Government have appointed him as Ambassador at Large for the environment, and he heads a foundation looking at options for constitutional change in Australia. He would have to clear acceptance with the Australian Government.

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Lord Carr of Hadley

Born 11 November 1916. Educated Westminster School, Gonville and Caius College Cambridge. Conservative MP for Mitcham 1950-74, Sutton, Carshalton 1974-76. PPS to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs November 1951 to April 1955. PPS to Prime Minister April to December 1955. Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour and National Service, December 1955 to April 1958. Secretary for Technical Co-operation, 1963-64. Secretary of State for Employment, 1970-72. Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, April to November 1972. Home Secretary, 1972-74. Governor, St Marys Hospital, Paddington, 1958-63. Chairman, Prudential Assurance Co, 1980-85. Director, Cadbury Schweppes Plc, 1979-87. Chairman, Strategy Ventures 1988 onwards. Member, Council, CBI, 1976-87. Chairman, Business in the Community, 1984-87.

Recreations: lawn tennis, music, gardening.

At the age of 74, Lord Carr is still very much lively and on the ball. The holder of high political office under the Heath administration, Lord Carr is a very experienced, shrewd and affable figure with few political enemies.

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PALMER, RT HON GEOFFREY WINSTON RUSSELL, MP

New Zealander. Another potentially good independent candidate.

Labour Prime Minister 1989-90.

Born 1942 in Nelson, New Zealand. Educated at Nelson College, Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Chicago (BA 1964, LLB 1965, Doctor of Law (Chicago) 1967).

Geoffrey Palmer is a serious lawyer and expert in constitutional questions. He was a competent politician. Hence his selection to be Prime Minister at a difficult time for his party. He is not a charismatic figure and when the party ratings failed to pick up he was displaced by the present leader of the opposition. Apart from being Prime Minister from August 1989 until September 1990 he was, at an earlier stage, Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Since he quit politics last autumn Geoffrey Palmer has been dividing his year between the United States, where he is Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Iowa and Wellington, where he is also a professor at the local Victoria University. At the moment he is in Wellington.

Geoffrey Palmer has a dry manner but would be a "firm, patient and neutral English speaking facilitator".

We do not know whether Victoria University would be prepared to release him at short notice, or, indeed, whether he would be interested in the job.

We cannot think of any other New Zealander of this stature who would meet the job specification better than Palmer.

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Baroness Warnock

Born 14 April 1924. Married to the Philosopher Sir Geoffrey Warnock. Educated St Swithuns, Winchester; Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy, St Hugh's College, Oxford, 1949-56. Head Mistress, Oxford High School, 1966-72. Mistress of Girton College, Cambridge since 1985. Member, Independent Broadcasting Authority 1973-81. Chairman, Committee of Enquiry into Special Education 1974-78. Member, Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, 1979-84. Chairman, Advisory Committee on Animal Experiments, 1979-85. Member, Social Science Research Council, 1981-85. Member, UK National Commission for UNESCO, 1981-84. Chairman, Committee of Enquiry into Human Fertilization, 1982-84. Member, Committee of Enquiry into Validation of Public Sector Higher Education, 1984. Chairman, Committee on Teaching Quality, 1990.

Numerous publications on ethics and educational policy.
Recreations: music, gardening.

Baroness Warnock has intellectual qualities of a high calibre, and has held a wide range of significant public appointments, a number of which have enabled her to demonstrate her crisp chairmanship skills. In response to recent press speculation, Lady Warnock has pointed out that her husband is from an old Unionist family. There is no doubt, however, about the qualities of detachment, fairmindedness and intellectual rigour which she would bring to the task.

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Sir Patrick Neill

Born 8 August 1926. Warden of All Souls College, Oxford, since 1977. Educated: Highgate School, Magdalen College, Oxford. Served, Rifle Brigade, 1944-47 (Captain). Prize Fellow of All Souls, 1950. Vice Chancellor, Oxford University, 1985-89. Called to the Bar, Grays Inn, 1951; Benchers, 1971; Treasurer, 1990. Member, Bar Council, 1967-71; Chairman, 1974-75. Chairman, Senate of the Inns of Court and the Bar, 1974-75. A Recorder of the Crown Court, 1975-78. Chairman, Press Council, 1978-83. Chairman, DTI Committee of Enquiry into Regulatory Arrangements at Lloyds, 1986-87. First Chairman, Council for the Securities Industry, 1978-85. Independent National Director, Times Newspaper Holdings, 1988 onwards. Honorary Professor of Legal Ethics, Birmingham University, 1983-84.

Publication: "Administrative Justice: some necessary reforms" 1988. Recreations: music and forestry.

Sir Patrick Neill is a barrister of the highest intellectual distinction who has also held a number of important public offices. He would bring to the task of Independent Chairman one of the acutest minds in the British legal and academic worlds, and detached, fairminded and authoritative chairmanship skills.

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McMURTRY, THE HON (ROLAND) ROY QC

Canadian. Partner in Toronto law firm Blaney, McMurtry and Stapells.

Born in Toronto, May 1932.

We think he would be a good candidate. No evident bias on Irish matters although he comes from a Protestant background. He might be willing to take the job on.

Educated at University of Toronto (modern history, 1954), Osgoode Hall School (1958). Called to the Bar 1958: QC 1970.

He practised law for 17 years being elected to the Ontario Provincial Legislature in 1973. Appointed Attorney-General for Ontario two weeks later, a post which he held throughout his time in the Ontario Government. He was also Solicitor General 1978-82.

He ran unsuccessfully for the Provincial Progressive Conservative leadership in 1985, but had a considerable popular following in the province, and was very visible at a national level. A close friend of Prime Minister Mulroney.

He has a strong sense of social justice, but a tough view of criminal law. Interested in community service, he had an interest in Ireland as High Commissioner with a particular concern about community reconciliation.

An astute politician with the intellectual nimbleness and knowledge of problems in Northern Ireland to take on the job of Chairman. (His abilities are not apparent from his personal appearance: he is heavily built, rather lumbering with heavy eyes).

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Following the Remembrance Day Enniskillen bombing in November 1987 he established a scheme to allow young people from Enniskillen to visit Canada each year.

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