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14 OCT 1992 / AM 213/10

FROM: JONATHAN STEPHENS
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
14 OCTOBER 1992

(SIGNED)

JONATHAN STEPHENS
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
14 OCTOBER 1992
OAB EXT 6538

cc Mr Watkins - B
Mr Allsop - B
Mr Cooke (L&B) - B
Mr D A Hill - B
Mr D J R Hill (L&B) - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Quinn - B
Mr Templeton - B
Mr Percival - B
Ms Lodge (L&B) - B
Mr McCormick - B
Mr Lackie - B
Mr Archer, RID - B
Mr Bentley, HOLAB

For information:

PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Thomas (L&B) - B
Mr Alston - B
Mr Blackwell - B
Mr Wood (L&B) - B
Mr Margetts - B
Mr Caine - B

MR BELL (L&B) - B

PRESENTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

You have called the second meeting of your group for 10.30am next Monday on the VCR. Copy recipients are invited to attend. Those who are getting a copy of this for information only are also welcome to attend, or send representatives if they are not otherwise represented.

2. I attach an agenda and a paper on "Presenting an Agreement". The latter attempts to set out what the possibilities are, so that we have them in front of us and can consider which we want to pursue. It also suggests how we might divide the labour

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on those possibilities which we do pursue. The suggestions are simply my own at this stage - comments and additions from others would be welcome at Monday's meeting.

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1. Progress reports:

JONATHAN STEPHENS
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
14 OCTOBER 1992
OAB EXT 6538

- Bill of Rights (Mr D A Hill)

- preparing NI departments (Mr Watkins)

- project management systems (Mr Allsop)

2. Presenting an agreement (paper attached).

3. Policy issues to be resolved before any heads of agreement:

- endorsement (Mr D J R Hill and Mr D A Hill's minutes of 8 October - not to all)

- how much to re-open Strand 1.

4. Contingency planning:

- soft landings (Mr D J R Hill and Mr Thomas' minutes of 14 October - not to all)

- short-term under-achievement of optimal targets etc (my minute of 8 October - not to all)

5. Any other business.

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PRESENTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (PIG)

10.30 am Monday 19 October VCR possibilities for presenting any agreement which emerges from the current Talks, before 16

Agenda It sets out the key questions which will shape our presentation strategy and its organisation.

1. Progress reports:
2. It assumes that any agreement which emerges:
 - squaring Whitehall (Mr D A Hill)
 - will be finalised very late in the day;
 - Bill of Rights (Mr D A Hill)
 - will be in outline heads of agreement form;
 - preparing NI departments (Mr Watkins)
 - will have the support of all the Talks participants.
 - project management systems (Mr Allsop).

Objectives

2. Presenting an agreement (paper attached).
3. The most important target audience will be Northern
3. Policy issues to be resolved before any heads of agreement: politicians. The UK Government role might be to:
 - endorsement (Mr D J R Hill and Mr D A Hill's minutes of 8 October - not to all) clearly and concisely
 - how much to re-open Strand 1.
4. Contingency planning:
 - soft landings (Mr D J R Hill and Mr Thomas' minutes of 14 October - not to all)
 - get a positive message across abroad
 - short-term under-achievement of optimal targets etc (my minute of 8 October - not to all).

5. Any other business. on how much the British Government should be seen to be selling any agreement in Northern Ireland

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SC/SIL/20238

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PRESENTING AN AGREEMENT

This paper looks at the possibilities for presenting any agreement which emerges from the current Talks, before 16 November. It sets out the key questions which will shape our presentation strategy and its organisation.

2. It assumes that any agreement which emerges:

- will be finalised very late in the day;
- will be in outline heads of agreement form;
- will have the support of all the Talks participants.

Objectives

3. The most important target audience will be Northern Ireland. The best people to reach that audience will be NI politicians. The UK Government role might be to:

- establish the facts clearly and concisely
- emphasise the benefits to everyone
- get GB opinion in line
- keep the Irish Government in line
- get a positive message across abroad
- firefight as and when disagreements arise.

4. It's an open question how much the British Government should be seen to be selling any agreement in Northern Ireland

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SC/SIL/20238

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itself. We shall need to show we are committed to it, but it might be better to leave the round of door-to-door salesmanship to local politicians.

On announcement

Before an agreement

8. The other participants are likely to shy away from any

5. public One criticism of the 1985 Agreement was that opinion was not shaped in advance. With the current Talks: announcement from the Government's point of view will be a statement to the Commons - the Government must stand by confidentiality even if this at no-one else does;

9. - but presumably we can look to the other participants to have an eye out for their own constituencies, and to do any ground-clearing that's necessary.

6. But are there parts of the government machine which need to be prepared in advance? (Either because there might be implications for them, or because they will have to be up to speed as soon as an announcement is made.) Eg:

- NI Permanent Secretaries: Mr Fell.

- Whitehall departments: Mr D A Hill has this in hand;

10. We might also reach key opinion formers by letter:

- NIO junior Ministers: do they know what's going on?

- all NI MPs

- Chief Constable/GOC: Mr Ledlie to consider if they need briefing in advance?

- NI Permanent Secretaries: Mr Fell to consider advance briefing, if not already in hand?

- councils/councillors

- NIO(B) generally: Mr Ledlie to consider?

- other GB and NI opinion formers.

- key overseas posts, eg US: Mr Margetts to consider?

11. Perhaps PAB for Northern Ireland, and EEL (with Mr Cairns) for GB, might draw up lists?

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7. Do we also need to discuss and agree presentation in advance with the Irish: Mr Alston/Mr Dodds to consider?

On announcement

8. The other participants are likely to shy away from any public signing ceremony. They might just agree on a formal announcement by Sir Ninian Stephen. But the key announcement from the Government's point of view will be a statement to the Commons. (Indeed, the final negotiations might centre on what this statement says.)

9. The other personal briefings might cover:

- Church leaders: SofS/Hanley *Kellett*
- Business leaders: SofS/Hanley/Atkins *Lord Conesbury*
- Chief Constable/GOC: PUS/Mr Ledlie *Officer McNamee*
- NI Permanent Secretaries: PUS/Mr Fell.

10. We might also reach key opinion formers by letter:

- all NI MPs
- interested backbenchers and peers *FEC*
- opposition spokesmen *SACH*
- councils/councillors *Ken Board*
- other GB and NI opinion formers. *Letter for James Munn*

11. Perhaps PAB for Northern Ireland, and ESL (with Mr Caine) for GB, might draw up lists?

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12. Estabs/Cent Sec might consider an Office Notice to NIO/all NICS on the day of an announcement. //

13. We also need to consider overseas opinion. In 1985, joint approaches were made by UK and Irish Ambassadors to:

- US
- EC governments

Media - Australia, Canada and New Zealand

18. - UN, EC Commission etc. In 1985 a Minister went to the US the day after the Agreement (an excuse to fly Concorde)

14. There may be arguments against repeating joint UK/Irish high-level approaches: Mr Margetts/FCO to consider? (At least, we shall need a letter to the Australian PM.)

15. In terms of documentation, there will be two basic documents: that in Northern Ireland people will hear it through the mouths of Northern Ireland politicians. Indeed, the British Government - heads of agreement/SofS's statement/supporting material

20. - briefing. possibilities for wider publicity include:

16. The first will emerge from the Talks; the second will need to be produced by TPU/PDT (for use by NIO Ministers, rest of Cabinet, backbenchers, overseas posts?)

17. In terms of organisation, it would not be sensible to expect those directly involved in the Talks to organise the mechanics of the announcement and immediate briefings. Would a sensible division of labour be: (Mr Wood to investigate?)

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- Mr Wood: media
- PAB for letters/briefings in NI
- ESL for letters/briefings in the rest of the UK
- Mr Margetts: overseas
- Estabs: internal? will need contributions and resources from elsewhere. Estabs might like to note the following possible

Media

18. Mr Wood will want to offer advice. In 1985 a Minister went to the US the day after the Agreement (an excuse to fly Concorde) - perhaps less necessary this time?

Reaching the people London and Belfast to prepare letters etc
(ditto)

19. Most people will hear of an agreement through the media. It will help that in Northern Ireland people will hear it through the mouths of Northern Ireland politicians. Indeed, the British Government may need to be careful not to drown out those voices.

20. But the other possibilities for wider publicity include:

- White Paper containing heads of agreement, supporting documents etc, to go on sale (ESL to investigate mechanics, printing times, costs, Irish language version (?) etc?)
- Letter box drop to all NI households with heads of agreement/summary (Mr Wood to investigate?)
- Ministerial broadcast (Mr Wood to investigate?)
- Using a PR firm (best forgotten?)

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Pulling all this together

21. We shall need to be organising all of this at the same time as we are finalising any agreement itself. So, while TPU/PDT will obviously have an important input, we need another part of the office to co-ordinate the presentation exercise itself - perhaps ESL?

22. Whoever co-ordinates, will need contributions and resources from elsewhere. Estabs might like to note the following possible requirements:

- teams in London and Belfast to copy, collate and issue statements, briefings etc (possibly over the weekend, or overnight)
- typists in London and Belfast to prepare letters etc (ditto)
- London and Belfast offices to be fully operational for, say, the two weekends before 16 November (including BLIS engineers on standby).

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14 October 1992

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SC/SIL/20238