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FROM: KEITH JAGELMAN
PS/MICHAEL ANCRAM
21 DECEMBER 1993

- cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
- PS/Michael Ancram (L,B&DENI) - B/M
- PS/PUS (L&B) - B
- PS/Mr Fell - B
- Mr Thomas - B
- Mr Bell - B
- Mr Williams - B
- Mr Watkins - B
- Mr Wood (B&L) - B
- Mr Daniell - B
- Mr Maccabe - B
- Mr Quinn - B
- Mr Beeton - B
- Mr Archer RID - B
- HMA Dublin - B
- Mr Caine

Mr Brooker - B

ANCRAM ROUND - NEXT STEPS

Following the Joint Declaration on 15 December, the Prime Minister underlined the importance of the internal political discussions presently being taken forward by Michael Ancram. You will recall the Prime Minister called for these discussions to be intensified. The Ulster Unionists have welcomed this statement publicly.

2. There is an urgent need therefore to progress the Ancram Round as soon as possible in the new year. The Minister would like to be in a position to have further meetings with the parties in week commencing 10 January 1994 and would therefore be grateful if you would, in the interim, consider what format these meetings would take and what issues might usefully be discussed. The Minister's view is that there is much to be discussed in Strand I, including the proposals put forward by the UUP in their Blueprint. Dr Alderdice has also suggested to the Minister in conversation that he too has some new ideas on Strand I issues. It would be helpful, however, not to be seen to be restricting discussion to Strand I, although this may prove difficult unless the Irish Government are prepared to be more forthcoming than hitherto on their position on

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Strand II. The Minister is also very conscious of the need to ensure that a vacuum in political development terms is not allowed to develop in Northern Ireland while a highly publicised nationalist propaganda exercise is allowed to develop through the Forum in the ROI.

3. The Minister feels that, in the light of recent developments, a further letter of invitation should go to each of the parties, including the DUP, setting out an agenda for the next round of meetings. Such invitations would need to issue within the next two weeks to allow the parties time to make a considered response. Michael Ancram will be abroad until 9 January 1994 and would therefore be unable to approve and sign the letters. Given the Prime Minister's personal interest in progressing this initiative, the Minister has suggested the letters be prepared for signature by the Secretary of State and issued in the Ministers absence. I should be grateful therefore if, by copy receipt, PS/Secretary of State would seek the Secretary of State's approval for this course of action.

4. I shall be available and happy to discuss any aspect of these proposals with you or PS/Secretary of State as necessary.

SIGNED

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KEITH JAGELMAN
PS/Michael Ancram
OAB Ext 6488
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