

FROM: Q J THOMAS, DUS(L)  
11 MARCH 1994

PS/Secretary of State (L&B)

cc: PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)  
PS/PUS (L&B)  
PS/Mr Fell  
Mr Legge  
Mr Bell  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Williams  
Mr Wood (L&B)  
Mr Brooker  
Mr Daniell  
Mr Kyle  
Mr Maccabe  
Mr Archer, RID  
HMA, Dublin  
Mr Caine

**FUTURE WORK OF THE LIAISON GROUP**

Yesterday's meeting of the IGC approved the Liaison Group's report to the Conference (subject to the important amendment of substituting the word "requirement" for "parameters" as the second word of the last tirect of paragraph 6).

2. After the discussion I passed Mr O'huiginn a note suggesting a meeting in the week after next (he will be away next week with the Taoiseach in the USA). I asked whether we could expect an Irish paper, and whether he would prefer to give a paper with an overview of the scheme as a whole on the lines of that leaked in the Irish press on 19 November, or whether he would prefer to provide papers on particular subjects such as:

common principles

North/South institutions

East/West structures

the Irish proposal for a covenant.

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I reminded him that our own overall proposals had been given to the Irish side in our paper in September. Was there any aspect of the matter on which the Irish side would like a paper from us giving further elaboration?

4. We had a word after the meeting when Mr O'huiginn made it clear that he accepted that the onus now rested on the Irish side to propose a date when they had sufficient ideas and instructions. He indicated that he might have difficulty in obtaining political clearance for papers, because of the risk of them being committed to positions on paper which might leak. It might be that the Irish side would prefer to have a meeting when they spoke on the basis of clearly formulated ideas. I made it clear that in the end we would have to reduce the ideas to paper, but that we would be happy to meet them on that basis provided that they did indeed have clear and specific ideas. We left it that he could come forward to us when they had sufficiently clarified their own thinking so as to make a meeting meaningful. He said nothing to take up my offer to elaborate any aspect of British proposals.

5. It is likely that the pressures on the Irish side to come forward with clear and specific ideas will increase further in the wake of the further attack on Heathrow. Mr Mallon on the radio this morning, for example, drew the conclusion that with the Unionists having bailed out, and with the Provisionals taking themselves off the political field, it was for the two governments, building on the Joint Declaration (which he emphasised had been written for all the people of Ireland, and not just for the Provisionals) to work up clear proposals for a political way forward.

6. If it becomes clear, say by the next IGC, that in fact the Irish side has been unable to produce clear ideas so that the two governments can develop the "shared understanding" to which both sides are committed, then HMG may, depending on progress on Michael Ancram's parallel discussions with the political parties, begin to consider the way clear for a White Paper.

SIGNED

Q J THOMAS

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