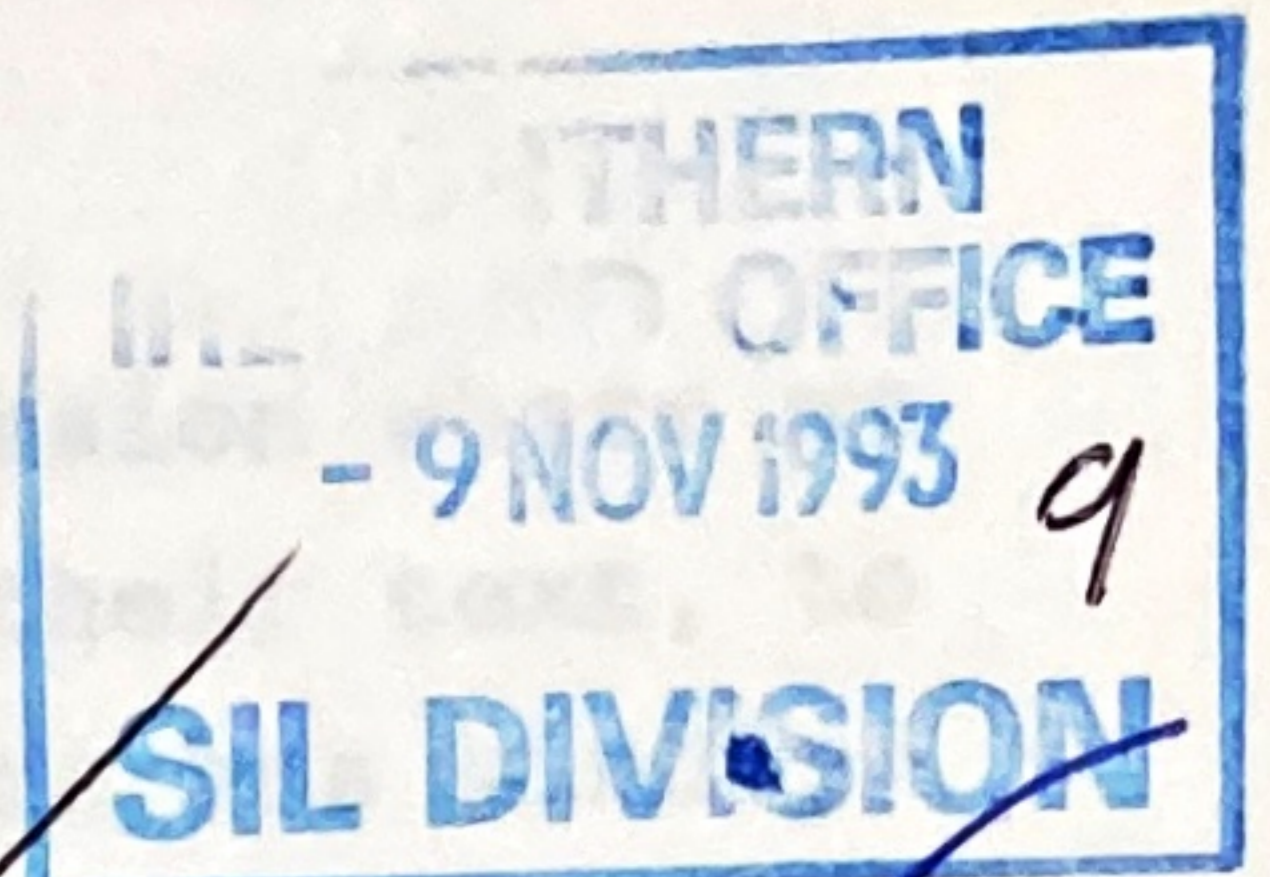


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FROM: Q J THOMAS, DUS(L)
8 November 1993



Mr Watkins

cc PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Bell
Mr Williams
Mr Cooke
Mr Brooker
Mr Maccabe
Mr Kyle
Mr Quinn
Mr Morrow
Mr Archer, RID
HMA, Dublin

cc Mrs Lodge
Mr Bellin
2) (= PD): (framework)
Dout

LIAISON GROUP

Thank you for your minute of 5 November about this. I have suggested that we pencil in the date of 12 November for a meeting of the Liaison Group. But I have also made it clear to Mr O hUiginn that we would want to go ahead with this only if we had received the Irish paper in good time. In practice, even if we do receive the paper on Tuesday as Mr O hUiginn indicated he hoped, we might not be ready by Friday for the reasons you mention. It will be open to us to postpone the meeting (or, more properly, to decline to confirm the date) on the basis that in view of the disappointing nature of the paper, and the fundamental rift which it exposes, we need more time to reflect on it.

2. On the other hand it would be good if we could produce a sensible Joint Framework Document at least by the time the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach meet again, perhaps on 3 December. And in any event I hope we can maintain our posture of being purposive and capable of despatching the business effectively and at speed. We may face a dilemma between postponing the meeting or going ahead with it, even though on the basis that we would approach it not as a drafting session but as one where we could have a "second reading debate". Indeed, even as I say

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this, I think I begin to relish the idea of a session where we decline to engage in drafting but put them, and their text, to the question. Despite what the Secretary of State has kindly said about Mr Spring's principle 4 I am not sure I shall be able to resist a certain teasing on the discrepancy between that, what is in article 1 of the Agreement and what, if anything, is left of all this in the paper we are handed.

3. The Irish side has after all had the luxury of considering and discussing our paper while declining to enter drafting, save on the preliminary passages, for some weeks. We might even have two or three meetings when we adopt this posture, so attractive does it begin to seem ...

LIAISON GROUP

(Signed QJT)

Q J THOMAS
8 November 1993
OAB 6447

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