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FROM: A WOOD
DIRECTOR, INFORMATION SERVICE
14 NOVEMBER 1995

cc PS Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Maxwell - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Brooker - B
Mr Bramley - B
Ms Checksfield - B
Mr Woods
Mr McAleer
Mrs Heron
Ms Jude - B
Mr Dougherty

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (B&L) - B
PS/MICHAEL ANCRAM (B&L) - B
PS/BARONESS DENTON (DANI, DED & L) - B

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT - MEDIA RECEPTIONS

The Secretary of State and Ministers will be aware from earlier papers that we expect an exceptionally high level of media interest in the visit. Despite the complicating factor of the President's immediately preceding visit to GB we expect to have a large number of media people in the Province well before 30 November, and indeed many of the White House press corps may arrive in Northern Ireland on the afternoon/evening of 29 November.

One of the guiding principles of our media handling plans is that we facilitate their coverage by making arrangements for them which will work and will reflect well upon Northern Ireland; this is now well advanced.

The second and equally important principle is that we seize this once in a lifetime opportunity to "showcase" Northern Ireland to the world's media. To that end, NIIS and Departments will be using the

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occasion to encourage visits to Northern Ireland by senior writers/editors interested in, for example, business, tourism who would not cover the President's visit in news terms. Appropriate interests among Northern Ireland Departments will have information/briefing points in the Press Centre which will be fully dressed with photographs and displays of Northern Ireland products.

To offer Government recognition of this heavy media presence and to attempt to turn it further to our advantage, I propose the following briefing/hospitality opportunities:-

Tuesday 28 November

Early evening reception hosted by Baroness Denton with an orientation towards business, tourism etc. This would include particularly those media people specially targeted by IDB, NITB etc and should perhaps include some guests drawn from prominent local companies etc.

Wednesday 29 November

Working breakfast hosted by Michael Ancram, followed by a detailed briefing on media arrangements for the visit. I hope some of the senior American visit planners would also attend.

Wednesday 29 November

An evening reception to welcome, especially, those visiting media from the USA and elsewhere, hosted by the Secretary of State. The attendance would again include some Americans - the Consul General and visit planners, together with senior representatives of local organisations heavily involved with visit arrangements, such as British Telecom.

All occasions in the King's Hall, Balmoral.

We intend that these occasions will feature Ulster produce, so far as possible, and we will offer local companies the opportunity to sponsor the occasions in full or in part. Should this prove unsuccessful, we would of course have to bear the costs ourselves, but it would I believe represent a very sound investment.

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I should be grateful for an early indication if these proposals are acceptable to Secretary of State and Ministers. If so, fuller details and briefing will be provided in due course.

(signed)

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