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**DRAFT**

**SECRET**

**MEETING OF THE ANGLO-IRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE**

**LONDON, 22/23 SEPTEMBER 1994**

PST. PS  
AK Gills  
MS O'Leary  
Amb. Lunde  
Mr T Salt  
B/Potic  
Mr T. Dorr  
S/Tasia  
Mr M Dorr  
S/Africa  
Council

**Introduction**

The 54th regular meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference was held in London on 22/23 September 1994. The Conference was attended, on the Irish side, by the Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dick Spring TD, the Minister for Justice, Mrs Maire Geoghegan-Quinn TD, the Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Joe Walsh TD, Mr. Noel Dorr, Mr. Tim Dalton, Mr. Sean O hUiginn, Ambassador Small, Mr. Caoimhin O hUiginn, Mr. Fergus Finlay, Mr. David Donoghue, Mr. Pat Hennessy, Mr. Frank Dunne, Mr. Noel Waters, and from the Secretariat Mr. Declan O'Donovan, Mr. Sean Farrell and Mr. Michael Mellett. Mr. Michael Dowling attended for the Agriculture Item.

On the British side, the Conference was attended by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew MP, Minister of State Sir John Wheeler MP, Minister of State, Michael Ancram MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary Baroness Denton, Sir John Chilcot, Mr. David Fell, Mr. Michael Legge, Mr. Quentin Thomas, Ambassador Blatherwick, Mr. Graham Archer, Mr. Peter Bell, Mr. Ken Lindsay, and from the Secretariat, Mr Martin Williams, Mr Terry Smyth, Mr. David Kyle and Ms. Ruth Osborne. Mr. Danny MacNeill of DANI attended for the Agriculture Item.

Also present for discussion of security matters were Mr. Patrick Culligan, Garda Commissioner, Garda Siochana and Mr. Hugh Annesley, Chief Constable of the RUC.

The Conference began on 22 September with a discussion on Political issues (restricted numbers) over dinner.

On 23 September a short tête-a-tête took place from 10.45a.m. to 10.55a.m. The Restricted Security Session lasted from 10.15a.m. to 11.30a.m. Plenary began at 11.30a.m. and ended at 1.15p.m.

Anglo Irish Conference  
London, 22/23 September 1994

DRAFT AGENDA

22 September 1994

- 20.00      Arrival at Lancaster House
- Plenary (discussion followed by dinner)
1.    Political Matters (Restricted numbers)
    - (a)    Political response to PIRA cessation;
    - (b)    Review of progress on joint framework document;
    - (c)    Prospects for political talks

23 September 1994

- 10.00      Restricted security session (in NIO)
- 11.00      Plenary
1.    Political matters (restricted numbers)  
Any outstanding business.
  2.    Confidence Issues
    - (a)    Response of security forces to IRA cessation;
    - (b)    Personal protection for Sinn Fein representatives;
    - (c)    Closed border crossings and border security works;
    - (d)    Prison Issues;
    - (e)    Allegations of collusion (Update on Stevens enquiry, Mallon case, recent allegations of collusion).
  3.    Identity issues
  4.    Economic and Social Issues
    - (a)    Economic reconstruction and assistance to disadvantaged areas;
    - (b)    Prospects for International funding;
    - (c)    Fair Employment Review.
  5.    North/South Economic and Social Cooperation:  
Consideration of agreed joint paper on Animal Health and Rural Development.
  6.    Date of next Conference.
  7.    Any other business
    - (a)    Report of Boundary Commission
    - (b)    Kane, Timmons, Kelly
- 12.30      Press Conferences
- 13.00      Lunch
- 14.00      Depart

ANGLO-IRISH CONFERENCE, LONDON, 22-23 SEPTEMBER 1994

REPORT ON PLENARY SESSION  
INCLUDING DISCUSSION OVER DINNER ON 22 SEPTEMBER ON  
POLITICAL MATTERS

(The following account of proceedings is in the form of direct speech and is based on detailed notes taken during the meeting. It does not, however, purport to be a verbatim record nor is it necessarily exhaustive of all the exchanges.)

Item 1: Political Matters

The discussion of political matters at the Anglo-Irish Conference on 22-23 September took place over dinner in Lancaster House on the evening of 22 September and during a restricted session of the Conference on 23 September.

(1) 22 September

At the dinner in Lancaster House, the Tanaiste and the Minister for Justice were accompanied by N. Dorr, T. Dalton, S. O hUigian, Ambassador Small, D. O'Donovan, F. Finlay and D. Donoghue.

The British side consisted of the Secretary of State, Ministers Michael Ancram and Sir John Wheeler, J. Chilcot, D. Fell, Ambassador Blatherwick, Q. Thomas, M. Williams and K. Lindsay.

Mr. Mayhew: Welcome. The overall scene is more attractive than the last time we met. Let us look at the response (to the ceasefire) from the two Governments and the political parties. Let us consider where we are at present and what the way ahead is.

We think that a very important task has been to banish the idea, prevalent in some Unionist circles, that there is only one conceivable explanation for the IRA's sudden abandonment of what they had been fighting for - namely, that they had been granted clandestinely what they had wanted all along. The strength with which that feeling is held amazes me. It is held high and low and near and far. It is mostly irrational -but highly influential nevertheless.

The most likely explanation is that they acted because of the Joint Declaration, and in particular because they realized that there was no mileage to be had from the use of violence to achieve their political objective. I have been putting this forward as the more likely explanation. They have done this after a series of miscalculations in their response to the Declaration (the pressure for clarification, the Letterkenny conference etc) which gave the impression that they were holding to violence only because they could not get what they wanted by political means.

We have made progress here with those who support the Union by advancing this explanation (which I believe to be the true one).

You and I have the same objective. We wish to see a permanent end to violence so that those who want to see an end to violence can join the democratic process. There is no difference of substance between us. Rather, there is a difference of interpretation - a mild, but nevertheless significant, difference.

We agree that we cannot sit down with those who reserve the right to use violence. The Irish Government thinks it right to conclude that the ceasefire is permanent. We have been more cautious. We do not want any particular form of words but we do want them to express an intention to give up violence for good - so that they do not intend in any future circumstances to resume.

I am grateful for the understanding which has been shown, most recently and notably by the Taoiseach in Canberra. It is understandable that there should be greater caution here because our people have sustained three thousand deaths over the past twenty-five years.

We hope strongly that this is the intention. We have said together that there must be a renunciation which is permanent. We have said that within three months there will be discussions about preliminary matters. The references to "the clock ticking" are tiresome. I hope that the words (used by Sinn Fein/IRA) will become sufficient. We have now had three weeks without violence.



We thought that it was necessary not to snatch at what was being offered. Equally, we recognized that it was important not to deny Gerry Adams some visible and external response. You have seen what has been happening: soldiers are wearing berets, helicopters are not coming below 500 feet, etc. There will be more as the picture becomes clearer. We were able to lift the orders on ten roads. Only three of these were seriously controversial, as you know. Tonight, as I mentioned to you in private, I have made an order rescinding the closure of another six - taking into account, on the Chief Constable's advice, that there has been a further week without violence. We have lifted the broadcasting ban, thank heavens - this was a nonsense for a long time.

As for the parties, the DUP have been dismissive. The UUP have remained very sceptical but they have been reassured by the caution shown by the British Government. They want it to be real and they are prepared to believe that it is for real.

It is important to try to maintain something of a momentum so that, if there is pressure on Adams (complaints that he has nothing to show for what has been done), he will have something to show.

I hope that the United States and the Irish Government will do everything possible to have words produced which will enable us to say: "Fine, we are now into the verificatory period".

There has been an enormously important change, therefore, since we last met. This derives more from the Joint Declaration than from anything else.

**Tánaiste:** Thank you for your welcome. We are meeting for the first time in a situation very different from the circumstances in which we have been meeting over recent years. When one looks at the security brief (for the Conference) in terms of what has happened since the last meeting, it is clear how much has changed - and changed forever.

There is an opportunity here which both Governments must cultivate. I understand your reservations and caution - but we must be careful

not to give others any doubts about our intentions. We are each conscious of the other's difficulties. It is a question of finding the right balance. We must proceed on a day-by-day basis. Every day without violence in Northern Ireland is of major importance. Reinforcements are necessary on all sides.

Adams - whatever view we may take of him - seems to be able to bring his people with him. There is strong US pressure on him to deliver peace. That is why he got his visa in the first place. He is now returning to the United States.

I personally regret that Jim Molyneaux is not there at the moment. His presence would have had far more impact (than the visit by his four more junior colleagues). Everything said by the US (including by the President and the Vice-President) has addressed the needs of both communities .....

(Mr. Mayhew: Yes, they have been very good)

..... They have been friends to both Governments. There is tremendous potential at present and the onus is on both Governments to bring it along.

If you want them (Sinn Fein/IRA) to say "permanent", they are not going to do so. But from everything they have said, both in public and in private conversations, what they are saying is that it is over.

Hopefully the Loyalists will also end their campaign. They also deserve some time and some space to reach their decision (after all, the IRA took seven months). We cannot have any victories or defeats in this situation.

There is a glorious opportunity at present and it is our responsibility to nurture it.

The Unionists, both at leadership level and within the body politic, must move on. If there is no longer a threat of IRA violence, they must decide how to respond to that development and must recognise

Sinn Fein's democratic mandate. (We have said all along that, if the IRA renounced violence, there would be a new ball-game.)

If we in the Irish Government can help in any way in relation to the situation which you face, we are ready to do so. Sinn Fein have confirmed that our interpretation (of the ceasefire) is the correct one. If there is any way in which we can move that along .....

Mr. Mayhew: We said in the replies we gave last May that they would have to make a public renunciation of violence. I do not for one moment doubt the validity of your interpretation of the IRA's intentions. But we can only go by what they say and do. And we have to be seen to be going by objective criteria.

It would be surprising if you had not had private reassurances (from them). However, we cannot rely on anything which has been said in private.

I hope that they can just take things a little further so that we can say: "Yes, we can be certain now that this is permanent".

Our approach is paying off. We are now hearing from John Taylor that his guts tell him that it is real. He is a very powerful figure.

Tánaiste: I was surprised by Taylor's initial statement (which he has renewed tonight). I thought that he would have been one of the last to come across. It is very significant that he is saying emphatically that this is new and for real. This must carry considerable weight.

Mr. Mayhew: We have taken the position we have taken because we believe it to be the right one. We note also that, having taken it, John Taylor and others have adopted a benign stance which they might have been reluctant to do had they been behind the British Government (rather than slightly in front).



I am very aware of the danger of "blighting this green shoot" - and so is the Prime Minister. That is why I hope that we can do this before very much longer. However, we have to contend with media claims that there have been secret deals.

Tanaiste: In the South nobody has raised any questions about deals. It has been made very clear that we were not interested in deals. We will keep repeating that we are not in the business of making deals - as anything built on sand will not last.

I am encouraged by the hope you expressed. The resolve and determination of both Governments is very important. Both of us are committed to solving this problem. We must both be stronger than those whom we are trying to bring along.

Mr. Mayhew: We are very close. The difference between us is only one of interpretation - not of policy or substance.

Tanaiste: The media want to see controversy and differences between the two Governments. We must ensure that the gap is not so wide that they can get inside.

Mr. Mayhew: How do you view their undoubted capability to resume? People say: "You know that they still have a large arsenal of weapons etc".

Tanaiste: Some Unionists have said to me (as have some members of the Dail - Fine Gael, the PDs etc - when the question of verification has arisen) that they realize that there will be no clinical agreement that e.g. "next Monday at 9 a.m. everything will happen". What we are talking about here is a process. These things are further down the line. You can convince people in stages that we are all going in the same direction.

Mr. Mayhew: What did the Taoiseach mean in Canberra with his remark (for which I have already publicly expressed appreciation) that the question of their arsenal is relevant to the issue of demilitarisation (including e.g. the withdrawal of troops to

barracks)? Is he saying that Sinn Fein would have to surrender their arms before being admitted to the Forum?

Tánaiste: What he meant in the first instance is that, if the threat of violence is removed and a certain period of time elapses, the British Army will no longer need to be present.

The parties in the South will need to have evidence of Sinn Fein willingness to start shifting arms. The Minister for Justice and I have made statements indicating that, if there is no longer any violence in the North, there will be no reason for the arms to be retained. There are, of course, many complications in terms of how we get the arms off them.

I am worried, however, that, if we start putting that argument upfront before the Forum starts, Sinn Fein will reply by asking why they should have to take this step before anything has happened and will point to the substantial loyalist arsenal of weapons etc.

If we can bring them all along together, that is much better. I see these issues as arising further down the line.

Minister for Justice: The Secretary of State has himself asked what is happening on the other (Loyalist) side. A decision by those people to call a ceasefire would be a hugely significant development.

Tánaiste: Our view is that the statements by the Loyalist paramilitaries have been quite reasonable. They seem to be at least contemplating movement. Are you hopeful about the situation there?

Mr. Mayhew: It has moved back from the high water-mark of sixteen months ago (their indication that they would stop if the IRA did).

They are more cautious now. They need a lot of reassurance. They want clarification etc. They are very volatile. While the IRA are a tightly disciplined organization, this lot are all over the place - a more unruly horse.

However, they are still broadly reactive and likely to give up if they are satisfied that others have done so. But the timescale is not easily discernible. However, I think it will be sooner rather than later.

Mr. Wheeler: The position there is more hopeful than the arms issue.

Minister for Justice: It is obviously a crucial point for us in the light of the Connolly Station attack and other threats (including to individuals). How significant is it to them that the British Government has not accepted the ceasefire as permanent?

Mr. Mayhew: If the British Government had done so initially or even now, their reaction might have been that that confirmed their suspicions. The fact that we have shown caution has perhaps provided them with some reassurance.

Minister for Justice: From a security point of view, I would be concerned about allowing the situation to drift. If the British Government were to say something at this crucial time, it would be very helpful.

Mr. Mayhew: It is first necessary to catch the "crucial time".

The Prime Minister, being a little further back from this than I am, has shown a better perspective than I have. He sees it in a particular way that I entirely endorse.

Tánaiste: Is there anything the Irish Government could say which would allow the situation to move forward?

Mr. Mayhew: No - it all turns on the IRA's judgement.

Tánaiste: I don't like to hear slogans about "civil disobedience" etc. But, if that is the only activity envisaged, we can cope with that. It is better than bombing campaigns.

Mr. Mayhew: Could I say that it would be helpful if there were no talk about "demilitarisation" and if care were taken with Irish

Government statements in the context of Unionist suspicions? I know you see these suspicions as unjustified but if we could just steady things ....

The Taoiseach has said a lot of helpful things, both orally and in writing. But "demilitarisation" plays like strychnine. It is just this single negative point ....

Mr. Angram: There has been an inclination on the part of Sinn Fein spokesmen in recent weeks to divorce themselves from the IRA. There is a growing perception that this could mean that they will take the line that they (the IRA) have "nothing to do with us" and they will therefore put no pressure on the IRA to take any particular course. We must address this doubt.

Mr. Fall: Responding to the Tanaiste's question about what the Irish Government might do:

The sooner we can find a way for Sinn Fein spokesmen to say things which are helpful to the British Government, the better.

There is a view that the Secretary of State has set a test for Sinn Fein, i.e. that they must use their own words to say that it is all over for good. But all they have to say is that the Irish Government say that it is all over for good and that they are right. This may be pedantic, but neither Adams nor McGuinness has so far said this. What they have said is that the Irish Government and the United States have responded correctly. If they had said that you had interpreted their intentions correctly, we would be further down the road now. This might be something to be looked at.

Mr. Mayhew: Best of all would be if they were to say something directly and not obliquely. The Prime Minister feels very strongly that it should be direct. It is true that I have offered (David Fell's suggestion) as a means. However, the Prime Minister is a direct person himself. The longer it goes on without a direct statement, the more people's scepticism is enhanced.



The British Government recognizes that they cannot say that it is "permanent". But we have not required them to use that word. I have been worried by the fact that the initial IRA statement came from "P. O'Neill" whereas all the glossee on it have come from Martin McGuinness etc.

Mr. O hUiginn: We must be careful not to fall into the trap of believing the IRA's own mythology. They are not Supermen. There is a dividing-line for them between honesty and propaganda. The former means that they cannot give a guarantee of permanence.

There is very little doubt about their intentions. It is for real and it is not a cosmetic game. The leadership has very little place to go other than to continue on the path it has chosen. Because they are curiously scrupulous about these things, they point out that the Prime Minister, for example, cannot predict the horizon beyond the present Parliament. They regard this as a tactical game, therefore, which they do not intend to enter. With a slightly naive literal - mindedness, they argue that they cannot give guarantees about an environment which they cannot control.

The key to the weapons issue has to do in large measure not with the attitude of the British Government but with concerns on their part about Loyalist violence. With the language he has been using, the Taoiseach has been trying to be helpful to the people whom he wants to bring into the tent. But there is no doubt that the real agenda is about the Loyalist paramilitaries. Unless you draw both sets of weapons together, you will draw neither. Demilitarisation must also involve the British Army. Whether we like it or not, that is the mythology with which we have to deal.

Mr. Chilcot: The Irish Government has still probably to face a prolonged test from the Loyalists. The Loyalists probably intend to engage in a ceasefire while maintaining at least the semblance of a claim to attack the South.

The Provisionals are continuing to target material and to recruit. We will have to live with that.



We could therefore both be in a far worse situation than the one in which we find ourselves.

The best prospect is that both the UDA and the UVF would declare a ceasefire in Northern Ireland but maintain the right (as they would claim) to attack the Irish State.

Tanaiste: What are they (the IRA) recruiting for?

Mr. Chilcot: The benign interpretation is that they want to keep the young lads off the streets and out of trouble. But this means that they are maintaining their capability.

Mr. Wheeler: The PIRA quartermasters have control of the weapons (unlike the Loyalists).

Mr. Chilcot: The political leadership of Loyalism is the most unsettling aspect. Only slowly will a leadership emerge. Patience is required from you even more than from us.

Tanaiste: Yes. We have asked privately for them to start leading (and to negotiate, therefore, from a position of strength). They are beginning to realize that they need a new perspective.

Mr. Fell: You are beginning to see the start of a Loyalist leadership emerging at community level. Community leaders are beginning to assemble themselves. This is probably the start of a new political realignment. But there is a long way to go.

Mr. O'Donovan: I would be worried at the idea of being patient and waiting until a Loyalist political leadership emerges. We should set ourselves a brisker timetable for talks and push ahead with the framework document. We should try to ensure that the document emerges in a more receptive atmosphere. We should maintain the political momentum.

There already is a loyalist leadership of sorts. David Ervine has emerged from the shadows and has been saying some intelligent things.

Mr. Fell: The problem is that he has no democratic mandate.

Mr. Mayhew: I agree with Declan that certain Unionists have been elevating the framework document....

Tanigate: Time is of the essence in relation to the framework document....

(Mr. Mayhew: I agree )

.... Meetings have been set up. We must try to move as quickly as possible. If we had a framework document agreed between us, that could be a major foundation-stone.

Mr. Angram: Declan said something very important: the framework document must be launched into a receptive atmosphere. This is absolutely vital. We could get the Unionists eventually to the table - but we must first dispel the suspicion that we are doing private deals. We know that there will be aspects of the framework document which will be unacceptable to both sides. Therefore a lot of work must be done to ensure that there is a receptive atmosphere before we even launch the document in their direction.

As far as the Unionists are concerned, I have said before that the DUP will begin to look for reasons to come back into dialogue. We are now seeing the first glimmers in this regard. They no longer feel that they can stay entirely outside. We will allow them an opportunity to come back and to become part of the process.

As for the UUP, they are keen to see political development. They realize that there will have to be other arrangements made with regard to the other relationships. But they are frightened about possible deals (despite the reassurances which the Prime Minister's statement would have given them). They are also concerned about a possible "slippery slope", i.e., that if they come on board at all they could begin to slide in a direction which they don't like.

They are also frightened by comments (or what they see as leaks) about the framework document. The comment in the Daily Telegraph

about a possible cross-border body having legislative functions rang a lot of alarm bells with them. They also believe that others are being told things about the framework document which they are not being told. They recall in this respect the 1985 negotiations (when everyone else seemed to know what was going on and they did not).

We have maintained confidentiality and we will continue to do so.

Tanaiste: It is very important to realize that agreement between the Governments does not necessarily mean that others will also agree. We must do the preparatory background work.

Mr. Chilcot: Yes, a lot of ground-work and "softening up" needs to be done before we can get to the final point of agreement on a text.

Tanaiste: I have no difficulty with that. It is extremely important. I recall the two months' preparatory work which went into launching the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. We cannot agree a text, say, on a Thursday and launch it on the following Monday.

Mr Chilcot: Part of the preparatory process will require top-level political participation. You will need, Tanaiste, to give some hours of your own time to this.

Mr. O'Donovan: I agree. We originally thought of the framework document as something to be prepared by officials, endorsed by the Governments and given to the parties at a point where they are about to sit around the table. But that is not the case now. It could be many months before talks begin. We must think of this document as "Son of Joint Declaration" (not as a set of parameters for talks). If we think of it in the way we presented the Joint Declaration, we will be on the right track.

Mr. Angram: As Declan says, maybe there is work to be done beforehand and also after.

Tanaiste: Yes. As John Chilcot said, at the stage of agreement (between the Governments) it is possibly already too late to do preparatory work.

Mr. Fell: There is not much time left. We must get into the preparatory phase very soon.

Mr. O hUiginn: It should be recalled that all but two of the parties -the UUP and the DUP - are ready to get around the table immediately.

Mr. Anoran: And Sinn Fein.

Mr. O hUiginn: No - their problem is not getting to the table but being allowed to the table.

It is important to recall that the Joint Declaration showed that the two Governments are capable of sponsoring a roughly middle terrain which people could be recruited to but which they could not reach by themselves.

The Prime Minister was very clever in putting forward the referendum idea. But there is a danger that some Unionists will begin to say "We can now get a Unionist veto restored on everything" It is very important that the framework document should show that there is an independent middle ground to which everyone can rally.

Mr. Anoran: When Strand One is added to the equation, there will be a balance which will suit both sides.

Mr. Mayhew: I am very glad that the work is going as well as it is in the Liaison Group and in the group on which John and Martin (Mansergh) sit. We won't go into detail (on the framework document), unless you wish. But what is for real is the importance and centrality of the constitutional issue. If we do not get that right (i.e., to meet the Unionists anxieties), we will not get the Unionists to agree to a North/South body. And, if that happens, the SDLP will not agree to an Assembly.

Tánaiste: Yes - everything will unravel. I personally think we can achieve that.

Mr. Mayhew: I am heartened to hear that.

Tanaiste: From our perspective, there is a need for an all-Ireland framework to be part of the balance. Northern nationalists want that.

Mr. O hUiginn: Sir John Chilcot, who is always very predictive in his own system, said that a Loyalist cessation might involve reserving the right to kill in the Republic. If the IRA had said that they would stop killing Irishmen but would continue to kill British people, they would have met with a dusty response in the South. I assume that there would be a massive consensus against, and complete dismissal of, anything on the lines indicated by John Chilcot.

Mr. Chilcot: Of course.

Mr. Mayhew: The arrest and charging figures for last year show our determination to deal with Loyalist paramilitaries. There would be an instant dismissal.

Mr. Falls: It would be totally condemned in the broad Unionist church.

Mr. Mayhew: After Paisley's abbreviated interview with the Prime Minister, there was a very strong feeling within the Unionist family that he had let them down. There would be a similar reaction if Loyalists were to bomb Dublin.

The Army and the RUC will have a greater opportunity to target Loyalist paramilitaries (as a result of recent developments). Joe Hendron has said that his people are very glad to see the RUC still on the streets of West Belfast.

Tanaiste: The gestures in relation to berets and other items of equipment are very helpful. There is a momentum here which we must all tap into....

Mr. Mayhew: .... and sustain.....



Tanaiste: Yes. We must do this on a day-by-day basis. Joe Hendron's point is well-taken. Efforts are being made on all sides. We must move it along. There is no support for a campaign of civil disobedience.

Mr. Chilcot: There was an attempt to drum up support in the New Lodge last week. Doors were banged but nobody came out.

Mr. Dalton: As regards the political response to the ceasefire, it is important to bear in mind that the pressures are not just inside the IRA. They are also outside - in Republican Sinn Fein. That is a factor to be borne in mind. They will succeed in drawing people away if the response seems to them to be too slow.

Mr. Mayhew: We want to do it as soon as we decently can.

Mr. Dalton: I just wanted to make clear that there is a factor other than dissidents within the IRA.

Tanaiste: There is media scepticism and we must work to convert them. There is potential for a canvas of peace in the background.

Ambassador Blatherwick: How will the Forum go? How does it fit in with the Declaration?

Tanaiste: Ideally, I would like to have the framework document, building on the Declaration, out there before the Forum begins business.

Ambassador Blatherwick: In other words, published?

Tanaiste: Yes. We will discuss the options tomorrow. Once the work is completed, we must get it out there. Once there, the Forum will do its own work.

Ambassador Blatherwick: Will there be a summit?

Tanaiste: Yes.

Mr. Thomas: If the framework document is in the public domain and the Forum is meeting regularly, isn't it in realistic terms part of the foreground rather than the background? What will the Forum do with the document? What should the Unionists make of the public discussions of it?

Tanaiste: The Forum's raison d'etre is to get Sinn Fein into politics.

Mr. Thomas: Do they need the framework document for that?

Tanaiste: We need it.

Mr. O'Donovan: If we go into the Forum without it, there will be inevitable pressure on us to say what is in it.

Mr. Angram: After the framework document comes out, we will need to look very carefully at how we deal with it before we get around the table.

Tanaiste: I would like to go into the potential scenarios tomorrow. We want to get these people in. For a lot of us, that is not easy. But we have said that we will be generous in our response. If we want to avoid another 25 years' violence, we must get them inside the room and allow them to express themselves in a democratic fashion. Ideally, I would like the Unionist parties to make some contribution to the Forum.

Mr. Fell: There are a huge range of interlocking issues here in relation to the future schedule.

First, what needs to be said to satisfy the British Government that the cessation is for real.

Second, what needs to be done in order to get Loyalist paramilitary violence stopped.

Third, the framework document discussions.

Fourth, the advance "softening-up" of the parties.

Fifth, the Forum.

Sixth, the possibility of bilaterals after the framework document becomes public.

And seventh, round-table talks - probably as the last step.

Mr. Thomas: Add in the exploratory dialogue.

Mr. Fell: If we are talking of a summit by the end of October, how does that fit in with all of these steps - is that the eight?

Tanaisie: The 31 August development has changed things dramatically. We would not be forgiven if we did not turn up the speed during the month of October.

Mr. Dorri: The purpose of the framework document has shifted a little. It was originally thought of as a means of getting talks underway. But now it is a very important brick in terms of reassuring people about what the Governments are doing. That points to the need for earlier presentation of the document.

Mr. Mayhew: I endorse that. The framework document is essential to the prospects for progress.

The constitutional issue is central for us. We must go at it hammer and thongs.

I am glad that there are very good relations between us at both official and political level. It may be that things will prove intractable on the constitutional issue - in which case the Heads of Government will have to get on with it. We have agreed that some floating of concepts (through not exposure of the text) is needed with the parties in advance.

We are agreed tonight on the centrality of the constitutional issue for the future of our discussions.

Ambassador Small: What is the purpose of Paisley's proposal for a pan-Unionist Forum?

Mr. Mayhew: He won't get Stormont for it!

There is no great harm in having Unionists views collated with clarity and strength.

Ambassador Small: Will the UUP be there?

Mr. Mayhew: I don't know.

At this point, the discussion came to an end. It resumed in a restricted session of the Conference (with the same participation) on the following morning (11.35 - 11.55 hrs).

(II) 23 September

Mr. Mayhew: We agreed to resume our restricted political discussion, primarily to recap in the form of a note recording the matters we covered and the conclusions we reached. I gather that the note, which both sets of officials have seen, has been adjusted...

Tanaiste: I have read it and it does indeed recap our discussion.

The amended note was thereupon agreed.

Tanaiste: Let us concentrate now on the timetable for our work and on how quickly the parties can be involved.

Mr. Mayhew: We have agreed to crack on with the framework document as quickly as possible. The reply to media questions on this point must be: "As soon as we can". We can say openly that we want to get on as fast as we can and hope that we can carry this through to an agreed text representing a shared understanding on the part of the two Governments.

Tanaiste: Yes, we want to bring things to an early conclusion.

Mr. Mayhew: We will probably be asked about a date for the summit. We can say that there will be one before the end of the year.

Tánaiste: That will depend to some extent on how the work progresses. -

I would be slightly worried about the phrase "end of the year", which will be interpreted as December.

Mr. Mayhew: Let's say "the latter part of the year".

We will be asked about the use of the document once it is agreed. The main thing to say is that we have not reached a concluded view on this. We must keep in mind that its purpose is to help the parties to get into talks.

Mr. Ancrem: As regards the timetable, it is very important that we do not set strict dates. One of the problems last year was that, having set dates, there was a public sense of failure when the dates passed by.

Tánaiste: Let's say "as quickly as possible".

Mr. O hUiginn: There is an expectation of a summit in early autumn (as the Taoiseach and Prime Minister have indicated this on the record). We might say that the two Governments will be in touch on this point.

Mr. Mayhew: We agreed last night that the object should be to minimise the risk of the document being rejected out of hand by any participant. Without brokering the text (with the parties), there is advantage in floating its concepts and ideas in advance. At an appropriate time, therefore, we would do this. We would then offer the document to the parties. By that time, we would have decided our policy on publication or otherwise.

Mr. Ancrem: Of the two Unionists parties, one is not talking to us but the other has asked to see all the working papers. I have told them that these are confidential. There is of course merit in not



getting any party tied into particular texts. I have, however, used material with them which arises from what both Governments have said on the public record.

We will have to think about how we "play in " Strand One (as this is not in the document, other than in the form of a reference to the 1992 discussions). Are there ways in which we could do this (e.g., by using the sub-committee reports or the "notions" document for last year)?

Mr. O'Donnell: It is very important to recruit the goodwill of the parties in relation to the document. But the exercise should be precisely that. The document must not be amended in the light of the input from the parties.

Mr. Mayhew: I am suggesting simply that we take the temperature of the parties before we conclude our views in the document.

Mr. Thomas: The "handling plan" ( a reference to a phrase in the note on the previous night's discussion) will presumably ensure that we have a common understanding in this area. There are potentially different ways of doing this - whether by "softening the parties up" on what we have already agreed or by negotiating with them on something which has yet to become an agreed text.

Mr. Mayhew: What is the Forum's timetable?

Tánaiste: We have had a first round of consultations. The parties are putting in submissions about how the Forum would operate, the number of meetings etc. There is some uncertainty about the envisaged duration of the Forum (we want to keep it in existence for as long as is necessary). The Taoiseach has talked of getting it underway by the end of October. The chairmanship is another issue.

A further issue is the numerical representation of each party. Obviously, a balance must be kept. We may increase the representation of the Northern parties.

We will keep you informed about our next round of consultations with the party leaders.

Mr. Mayhew: What will be on the menu?

Tánaiste: Everything and anything! The parties will outline their views on how they believe that progress can be made. We do not want it to become a pan-nationalist front. The presence of Alliance will be helpful in that respect.

We hope that the Unionists will make some input (they might decide, for example, to send in submissions). We had some show of interest from the smaller Unionist parties and views on how they might be involved.

Mr. O hUiginn: There has been some feedback from Fine Gael, Democratic Left, etc. on the suggested terms of reference. Wally Kirwan has been carrying out some informal consultations. I presume that, on the Taoiseach's return, an attempt will be made to draw the various elements together.

The position is that Alliance are definitely coming; the DUP are definitely not; The UUP are most unlikely to (but there has been no response so far); and Jim Kilfedder has yet to reply.

Mr. Chilcot: Assuming that the framework document is agreed and published, the terms of reference for the Forum must presumably admit of its discussion. The relative timing will, therefore, be important.

Tánaiste: Yes. It is better for us if the framework document is out and published prior to the establishment of the Forum. We will be under pressure by the end of October if there is no sign of the Forum being established. We must keep in close contact on this.

Mr. Angram: The final two tirets of the note (on the previous night's discussion) cover the position.

Mr. O'Donovan: The "handling plan" is presumably for the Liaison Group to draw up?

Tánaiste: Yes.

Mr. O hUiginn: There may possibly also be a bilateral meeting of some kind at Ministerial level.

The discussion then concluded and the full Plenary session commenced.

Item 2: Confidence Issues

As noted below, agenda items 2(a), (c) and (d) were dealt with during the Restricted Security Session.

Tánaiste: Perhaps we could look again at the agenda, Secretary of State. We have dealt with a number of the items already. We have covered political matters in their entirety in our session last night and this morning. The next item is confidence issues and here we have also dealt with some of the items listed during the restricted security session. We've dealt with the responses of the security forces to the IRA cessation. We didn't deal with the question of protection for Sinn Fein representatives. However, we dealt with cross-border roads. We also looked at prisons issues. We have still to deal with collusion.

Mr. Mayhew: Yes, that sounds fine. Well, Tánaiste and Minister, could I say to those who are now joining us, welcome. We are now established in Plenary. I think what you've suggested with regard to Confidence issues is satisfactory. The first item, therefore, is personal protection for Sinn Fein representatives. I'd like to have Sir John come in on this, but perhaps, Tánaiste, you would care to open the discussion.

2(b) Personal protection for Sinn Fein representatives

Tánaiste: Thank you, Secretary of State. As you know, the exclusion of Sinn Fein members from the Key Persons Protection