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Mr. T. Banta, Mr. P. T. ...

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Size of Delegations at meetings of the Three-Stranded Negotiations

1. David Hill (NIO) phoned me from Castle Buildings, Belfast, this afternoon to inform me of the content of a conversation he had just had with Martha Pope, following the completion of Senator Mitchell's round of meetings of the parties to discuss preparations for next Tuesday's opening of the three strands.
2. He told me that, on the basis of discussions with the parties, Senator Mitchell would be proposing the following arrangements for the size of delegations at meetings of Strand 2 and the Liaison Sub-Committees of the Plenary;

Strand 2

Larger parties	2 elected representatives + 2 supporters
Smaller parties	2 elected representatives + 1 supporter
Governments	2 representatives + 3 supporters

Liaison Sub Committees

2 delegates (not necessarily elected, per delegation)

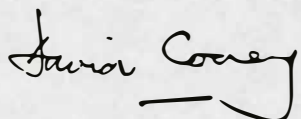
3. Hill said that the British side could live with the proposals for Strand 2, but felt that the numbers allocated to the Governments for the Sub-Committees were inadequate. I expressed surprise at the limited numbers proposed, both for Strand 2 and the Sub-Committees, since, when the two Governments met Senator Mitchell yesterday, they had made clear their preference to retain the same numbers as for the Plenary (3 + 3 for the larger parties, 2 + 3 for the smaller parties, and 3 + 5 for the Governments). Hill agreed that this was the case and indicated that the British Government, in their letter to the parties convening next Tuesday's meeting of Strand 1, have indicated that the size of delegations will be the same as for the Plenary.

4. I subsequently rang Martha Pope to inquire as to the precise position. Ms. Pope confirmed that, immediately prior to his departure for the U.S., Senator Mitchell had indeed proposed the arrangements referred to by Hill should be communicated to the participants. She told me that the parties, buoyed up by the success of yesterday's meeting of the Business Committee, where each delegation had only 2 persons present, had seen reduced numbers as offering an opportunity for progress. She said that when Senator Mitchell had proposed that the Governments be allowed to retain the same level of representation as at the Plenary, this had been rejected by the UUP.
5. In reply, I expressed surprise that the views of the Governments had not been further sought, before any suggestions were put to the parties. I also asked why it was proposed to reduce the Government delegations by 3, while the party delegations were being reduced by only 2. I also queried whether the progress achieved at the Business Committee was really due to the smaller size delegations and not to the elementary nature of the matter for decision and the absence of some of the more abrasive personalities from the meeting.
6. Ms. Pope accepted the point that the Governments were being invited to reduce their delegations by more than the parties and suggested that they might be offered 2 + 4, or 3 + 3. I said that if we were obliged to accept the reduction in numbers, we would prefer the latter.
7. Ms. Pope pointed out that, in any case, the responsibility for setting a size of delegations rested with the Business Committee. She said that it was likely that any proposal put to the participants would be with a view to next Tuesday's meeting only *and* would require confirmation at the meeting of the Business Committee scheduled for Wednesday morning. She did not rule out the possibility that Senator Mitchell might decide to propose that next Tuesday's meeting might meet with Plenary-size delegations and that the question of numbers might simply be referred to the Business Committee.

8. Ms. Pope confirmed that Senator Mitchell intended to convene meetings of the two Liaison Sub-Committees of the Plenary next Wednesday, following the meeting of the Business Committee. I pointed out that we were of the view that the numbers proposed for the Sub-Committees were also too limited, particularly in relation to the Liaison Committee on Conference Building Measures, where a whole range of issues would fall to be discussed. However, I noted that this matter could be discussed in the Business Committee, before the Sub-Committees were due to meet.

9. David Hill rang me again later to say that, having consulted within the NIO, the British Government would be seeking agreement on an increase in the proposed size of the Governments' representation at the Sub-Committees. He said that they would probably wish to have at least two additional supporters at next Wednesday's meetings and would wish to reserve the right to have larger numbers present at future meetings, particularly those of the Sub-Committee on confidence-building measures. I said that I was confident that we would support their demands.

10. I asked Hill what he expected to happen at the meetings of the Sub-Committee. He informed me that he had passed responsibility for the Sub-Committees over to the security side of the NIO. I expressed surprise that this should be the case in relation to the Sub-Committee on confidence-building measures. Revealingly, Hill expressed the view that the mandate of the Sub-Committee related to largely security issues. I noted that we might have a somewhat different perception of the potential role of this Sub-Committee.



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