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S/S Gallagher; Mr Teahon;
Mr Dalton; Dr Mansergh;
Ambassadors Ottawa and
Helsinki; Counsellors A-I Div;
Talks, Political Sections.

TADIRANK

Multi-Party Talks

②5 *seen by TAOIS*

hvk

Daily Report - 4 November 1997

6-11-97

1. **In summary:**

- A three-hour Strand Two meeting debated agenda items 3 and 4 (North/South institutions and relationships with other arrangements);
- Strand Two will meet again next Monday to complete the initial run over its agenda. The following week (17-19 November) will be devoted to intensive consultations in a format yet to be decided (perhaps smaller sub-groups or bilaterals/multilaterals). The two liaison sub-committees will also meet that week. Strand One and Strand Three consultations are envisaged for the subsequent week (24-26 November). A review Plenary has been fixed for 1-3 December;
- It is hoped that agreement can be reached next week on a format to facilitate more detailed engagement in the period from 17 November onwards. The two Governments have privately agreed to prepare a draft document, for deployment possibly on the Chairman's authority, which would identify areas of agreement and provide a basis for discussion at the review Plenary.

2. The Government delegation today was led by the Minister for Defence, who was accompanied by officials. In addition to the Strand Two meeting, we had bilateral discussions with the British Government and the Chairmen, the SDLP and Sinn Féin.
3. Opening this morning's Strand Two meeting, Senator Mitchell secured agreement on the scheduling arrangements indicated above. It was agreed that Strand Two would be brought forward to Monday next week (in order to accommodate the Presidential inauguration on the following day). Strand One will also meet next Monday. Emphasising the importance of discussions in all strands proceeding in tandem, the SDLP favoured a Strand One meeting and a Strand Three liaison session during the week of 24-26 November. The liaison sub-committee on decommissioning will meet on 17 November and that on confidence-building measures on 18 November.
4. Criticising remarks made at a meeting in West Belfast last night, the UUP (Taylor) sought clarification of Dr Martin Mansergh's status on the Government delegation (whether civil servant or political adviser). The Minister for Defence described Dr Mansergh as a highly respected civil servant employed by the Government and reiterated the Government's position on Articles 2 and 3 as previously set out by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

5. The SDLP, who had tabled a paper arguing the need for a coordinated approach to socio-economic planning between both parts of Ireland, launched today's substantive debate by presenting this paper. In response, the UUP (Taylor) said that they had always been in favour of North/South cooperation and increased trade but did not see a need for an all-Ireland body with executive powers to achieve this. Picking up a point made by Alliance last week, Taylor claimed that a decision by the Irish Government to join the single currency in 1999 even if the UK stayed out would have the effect of impeding North/South trade.
6. The Minister for Defence suggested that there was no substance in this point. He emphasised the importance of institutionalised North/South cooperation both for the practical benefit of people in both parts of the island and as a means of reflecting nationalist aspirations.
7. Other points in the debate included a warning by Alliance (Alderdice) that the South would have to be willing to sacrifice some of its own independence in this context. Sinn Féin welcomed the SDLP paper and pressed for a detailed UUP response. Labour asked the UUP to explain why they rejected executive powers for a North/South body, given the Minister for Defence's emphasis on the benefits which would flow to both parts of the island. The British Government (Murphy) endorsed North/South cooperation, noting in particular the potential to deepen this in the context of EU membership and also of changing constitutional arrangements in the UK.
8. This afternoon, we had a meeting with the SDLP, who favoured going into the bilateral/multilateral mode once the current "surfing" of the agenda has been completed and reported Sinn Féin support for this also. (They feared that the option of sub-groups would merely replicate stand-offs in the present format).
9. Sinn Féin, whom we also met, said that they would welcome any innovative structure which would enhance the possibility of real engagement. They underlined the importance of parallel action on confidence-building issues such as prisoners, the demilitarisation agenda (removal of troops from the streets and of Army observation towers in South Armagh) and Irish language issues. They also reiterated concern at the recent arrest of Anthony Kelly and mentioned a hint from the Secretary of State (also conveyed to us) that further extradition requests may be in the offing.
10. Further to a suggestion from Senator Mitchell this morning, we agreed with the British Government that we would aim to supply the Senator by 17 November with a draft of a document which would draw together agreed elements and which could be issued on the Chair's authority as a basis for the discussion at the review Plenary.
11. These are among the issues to be considered by Ministers during their review of progress to date at tomorrow's meeting of the IGC in Belfast.
12. Finally, the Minister for Defence and the Secretary of State jointly briefed the media to the effect that, while delegations at the talks had yet to reveal their bottom lines, there had been some interesting and encouraging exchanges and an intensive round of

consultations, perhaps in smaller sub-groups or bilaterals, would take place in the week after next in preparation for a review Plenary on 1-3 December.

David Donoghue

David Donoghue
4 November 1997