

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Reference Code:	2022/84/42
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Secret

07 OCT 1999

Week Four of Mitchell Review - Summary Note

1. Senator Mitchell had a further series of meetings with parties on Monday and Tuesday of this week (4/5 October - see programme attached). The schedule was a shortened one, primarily because of the impending UUP Annual Conference this Saturday and the reality that no substantive business was likely to be done in advance of that. Trimble's absence at the Conservative Party Conference was a further, albeit secondary, factor.

2. Mitchell had a valuable stock-take session with the Taoiseach on Tuesday evening. He also met on Monday morning with a number of private individuals, at their request; these included Rev John Dunlop, and Robin Wilson of the research group, Democratic Dialogue.

UUP/Sinn Féin

3. Following an unproductive meeting between the UUP and Sinn Féin last Friday, which was again characterised by mutual recrimination and hostility, Mitchell scheduled a further session between the two sides at lunchtime on Monday. Against the background of the upcoming UUP Conference, the Senator had no expectation that the atmosphere would be any better on this occasion. Nor was it. Adams accused Trimble of "telling lies" at his press conference after Friday's meeting (at which Trimble said that he had put clear questions to Sinn Féin which were met with "evasion"). In a hard-line intervention, which probably had a significant tactical dimension, Adams said that he had made very plain what Sinn Féin's position was on the matters in question - no to an interlocutor (by the IRA to the de Chastelain Commission)

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and no to an act of decommissioning by the IRA at this time.

4. In the circumstances, Mitchell decided to cut the meeting short - it ended after 45 minutes. More positively and significantly, he did, however, secure the agreement of both sides to an intensive all-day session next week in London.

Other Meetings

5. A number of other meetings went more positively. In particular, Mitchell felt that the meetings between the SDLP and the UUP, and the SDLP and Sinn Féin, had been valuable. Mitchell likes the methodical, low-key approach being taken by the SDLP (mainly Mallon, Durkan and Farren).

Next Week's Meetings

6. Mitchell regards next week as the start of the final phase of his process. With the UUP and the Labour/Tory Conferences out of the way, he expects people to begin to move into real negotiation mode - or, if this does not happen, he will be considerably closer to concluding that a successful outcome to the Review is not possible.

7. To emphasise the sense of increased intensity, Mitchell has decided to move the location of the discussions to London next week. His main focus will be on the UUP/Sinn Féin exchanges and he proposes to hold the all-day session between them on Wednesday. *[Note: he wishes to keep the fact of this session and its location completely secret for as long as possible.]*

8. Mitchell is also arranging a wider series of meetings, involving all the parties, for Thursday and Friday in London, probably in a Government building. He proposes to bring the UUP, the SDLP and Sinn Féin together on Thursday morning, with the possibility of a wider roundtable involving all the parties in

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the afternoon.

Meetings with Prime Minister Blair

9. Prime Minister Blair is due to meet next week (separately) with David Trimble and Gerry Adams/Martin McGuinness. The British side have consulted Senator Mitchell on these meetings and he regards them as a useful opportunity to reinforce messages on the need for movement. He has suggested that Prime Minister Blair also meet with the SDLP and, in addition, collectively, with the smaller parties. That is being arranged.

Mitchell's Assessment

10. Mitchell has told Adams privately that if he (Mitchell) produces proposals, Adams will have to stretch his people, as will Trimble - "there will be pain involved for both".

11. In parting observations to Dermot Gallagher yesterday, Mitchell said that he continues to regard a successful outcome as "do-able". At the same time, he also harbours very real doubts. In particular, he worries about the bad chemistry between the principals, in particular Adams and Trimble. He commented that it would be a great pity if the whole project were to fail "because of personalities".

12. Mitchell has now flown back to the US and will spend the coming week reflecting privately on the possible basis of a proposal which he hopes to table when the time is right.

QC

T O'Connor
6 October 1999

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PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE
4 & 5 OCTOBER

Monday 4 October

1200	Working Lunch - Bill Jeffrey, Dermot Gallagher, Jonathan Stephens, Tim O'Connor
1330	Sinn Fein/UUP (DT has to leave at 1530)
1530	SDLP/Sinn Fein
1800	SM depart Belfast City Airport for Dublin

Tuesday 5 October

1030/1100	SM return from Dublin
1130	SDLP/UUP
1400	Alliance/NIWC/PUP/Sinn Fein/UDP (~~to be confirmed~~)
	Bill Jeffrey & Dermot Gallagher

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