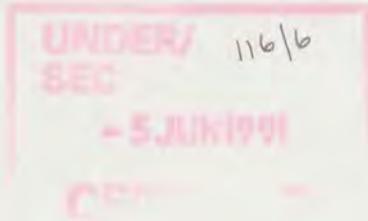


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FROM: PS/Secretary of State
4 June 1991

cc PS/SofS (B&L) - B
PS/MofS (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Pilling - B
Mr Thomas (B&L) - B
Mr Alston - B
Mr Cooke - B
Mr McNeill - B
Mr Pope - B



1592
5 JUN 1991
s/b
a Mr Molyneaux

Mr D J R Hill (B&L) - B

MEETING WITH THE UNIONIST LEADERS: MORNING OF 28 MAY 1991

1. The Unionist leaders met the Secretary of State in his office in Parliament Buildings at 11.15 am on Tuesday 28 May.

Dr Mawhinney, PUS and I were also present.

2. Dr Paisley began by expressing his frustration with the lack of business to do. Although Mr Hume had said that it was for the Unionists and the Secretary of State to resolve the outstanding matters, he wanted to make it clear that there was no hold-ups so far as the Unionists were concerned. Quite the contrary, they were "chasing at the bit", but if there was nothing to do, perhaps they should all "go home". Mr Molyneaux added that he could see the "spectre" of Summer 1990. A loss of momentum seemed likely, and expectations had been raised to an unwise extent. As there were three parties present, he wondered whether some further business could not be done along the lines of the discussions taking place on the agenda under Dr Mawhinney's chairmanship. One party did not have the right to veto the progress of others. Dr Paisley added that the SDLP were publicly passing doubts on the integrity of the Unionists. He did not trust their integrity. For Mr Hume to stay away and say that progress depended on the Unionists was unfair when there was nothing for them to do. Mr Molyneaux added that the question of the chairman was bound to take some time. No one was to blame for this. Nor could the ground-rules be finally agreed as the chairman might want to change the standing orders once he was appointed. Dr Paisley suggested that once the terms of reference for the chairman had been agreed, and they were "more or less" cleared, the individual chairman could be dealt with quickly or the

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parties could clear a list of, say, three candidates. There was no point in sitting around until the chairman had actually been appointed.

3. The Secretary of State responded that there was a degree of discrepancy between the judgements that had been made about the time that would be needed to select a chairman. It might be possible to do this quickly, but he doubted it. In this area he was at variance with Mr Hume, who thought that an appointment could be done quickly and easily. Provided that the rules for the chairman could be agreed, there was a case for persuading all concerned that the process should continue while a chairman was appointed, because the length of time that this would take was uncertain. This would be better than the alternative of a suspension, which would not be helpful for the process as a whole. Hopefully progress could be made over the next 2-3 days and the terms of reference finally agreed. In this context, he was a little concerned that when the Unionist leaders saw the media, Dr Paisley had indicated that the terms of reference had been agreed. Dr Paisley interjected that there was the "bones of agreement". Continuing, the Secretary of State said that a draft document was available, and in order to give the Unionists time to study the detail of it, it might be better to meet at, say, 2.00 pm rather than before lunch. The Unionist leaders agreed.

4. Mr Molyneaux asked where matters stood in respect of the Agenda for plenary sessions. Dr Mawhinney replied that there had been some informal discussion with the Alliance. The Secretary of State indicated that he was considering asking the SDLP to nominate somebody to be present to look at the Agenda. Mr Molyneaux stressed that the Agenda was a vital component of making progress. On reflection, he wondered whether the idea of a "spectacular" opening plenary session was a good one. There was a risk in inviting the parties to put their positions in clearly defined terms, which might become final positions. It might be better to scale down the importance of the opening plenary. Dr Paisley endorsed this approach. He thought it might be better to put a statement in writing which could be read before the meeting. Mr Molyneaux agreed. Dr Mawhinney observed that putting a statement in writing

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could equally well lead to an inflexible position. Mr Molyneaux commented that it would be more "dangerous" if views were read into the record of the meeting. The Secretary of State enquired whether the views of the Unionists were already on paper. Dr Paisley responded that they were "half" on paper.

5. The Secretary of State said that he hoped that it would be possible to deal with the guidelines by the middle of the afternoon. On the chairmanship issue, and pace Mr Mallie, there was purposive work being done by both governments. It would probably not be a good idea to trade possible names with the Parties, because of the risk of embarrassing eminent people. For example, the Canadian lady whose name appeared in the newspapers over the weekend was unknown to him; the first time he had come across the name had been from reading it in the Press. Dr Paisley commented that it would be disastrous to have a foreigner as chairman. The names being put forward on the "Talkback" programme were preposterous, and nearly all republicans. The Secretary of State said that once the guidelines for the chairman had been completed, it would be possible to take stock on the chairmanship issue. One possibility would be to speak to Mr Hume and warn him that as the other outstanding issues had been completed, there would be little option but to suspend proceedings in light of his absence. It would not be an ultimatum, but simply to make the position clear. Dr Paisley asked the Secretary of State to make it clear that criticisms of the Unionists for being responsible for holding up the process were unfair. The Secretary of State assented. Dr Paisley then stressed the importance of not being "bogged down" at the first plenary meeting in respect of the Agenda. He wondered whether plenaries might start the following day. The Secretary of State responded that he did not know when plenaries might start, but he was conscious of time passing. He might speak to the SDLP that afternoon.

5. The meeting ended just after 11.30 am.

Signed

A J D PAWSON
Private Secretary

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LD/SOFS/6204

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FROM: PS/Secretary of State
4 June 1991

cc - PS/SofS (B&L) - B
PS/MofS (B&L) - B
PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fellis - B
Mr Pilling - B
Mr Thomas (B&L) - B
Mr Alston - B
Mr Cooke - B
Mr McNeill - B
Mr Pope - B

117/6
UNDER/ SEC
- 5 JUN 1991

Mr D J R Hill (B&L) - B

5/6
cc Mr Haffigan

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH THE UNIONIST LEADERS: AFTERNOON
OF 28 MAY 1991

1. The Unionist leaders came to see the Secretary of State just before 6.00 pm on Tuesday 28 May. Dr Mawhinney, PUS and I were also present.
2. The Secretary of State explained that the next step would be to "test" the revised procedural guidelines they had produced with the other parties concerned. Dr Mawhinney had also made progress with the meeting of the Agenda group. He was not inclined to put pressure upon the SDLP until two out of the three outstanding matters had been settled. It was a good omen that Mr Hume had sent Mr Dennis Haughey to represent the SDLP on the Agenda group.
3. Dr Paisley asked whether Mr Hume had asked to be absent the following Monday as this was a bank holiday in the Republic of Ireland. The Secretary of State replied that this had not been raised with him, although he had raised with all the party leaders attendance at the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. While no further business could be done on the guidelines until the following day, he felt that some progress had been made, including, without being too sanguine, on the chairmanship issue. Dr Paisley commented that the chairman had to be "generally acceptable and of standing".
4. The Secretary of State said that once the procedural guidelines had been sorted out, he was inclined to invite Mr Hume to return in

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view of the progress that had been made, and thus avoid a suspension. It was just conceivable that plenaries could start on the afternoon of the following day. This would catch the media by surprise which would be very good news for the process. So far as the following day's business was concerned, it would be helpful if some of the Unionist delegation could be on stand-by for the following afternoon.

5. Mr Molyneaux reported that he had seen a television interview by Mr Hume, in which he had said that he had accepted the guidelines. The Secretary of State pointed out that Mr Hume would not have seen the revised guidelines. Mr Molyneaux added that Mr Hume had also said that he wanted the chairmanship issue to be resolved, which he regarded a matter for the two governments. Thus he seemed to be attacking the Secretary of State and not the Unionists. The Secretary of State said that there would be considerable pressure on the SDLP if process had to be suspended, and he did not mind taking some pressure himself at this stage. One positive side to Mr Hume's comments was that he had effectively discharged the Secretary of State's undertaking to Dr Paisley earlier in the day (viz to make it clear that the Unionists were not responsible for the lack of progress)! Dr Paisley observed that Mr Hume was very sensitive to Press criticism.

6. After an exchange of Attlee anecdotes between the Secretary of State and Dr Paisley, discussion turned to other matters. These have been followed up separately.

7. The meeting ended at approximately 6.15 pm.

Signed

A J D PAWSON
Private Secretary

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