

FROM: D J R HILL
CPL DIVISION
28 APRIL 1992

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cc. PS/Mr Hanley (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Ledlie
Mr Bell
Mr Alston
Mr Watkins
Mr Wood (L&B)
Mr Cooke
Mr Maccabe
Mr D A Hill
Mr Dodds
Mr Petch
Mr Copeland
Mr Archer RID FCO
HMA Dublin
Mr Sibson, Cabinet Office
Mr Brooker, PDT
Mr May, Talks Secretariat
Mr Campton, TAU

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h. h. m.

and [unclear]
Ms Murphy

UM 730/4

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B)

TALKS, 29 APRIL - SUPPLEMENTARY OUTLINE STEERING BRIEF

1. This note supplements the brief I submitted yesterday evening and takes account of the outcome of yesterday's meeting with the Unionist leaders and the discussion at this morning's briefing session.

Programme

2. We now envisage the following:

10.00 - final pre-brief, Secretary of State's office

10.30 - leaders' meeting

(11.00 - coffee served in lounge)

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- 11.30 - plenary opens
 - opening remarks by Secretary of State (leading into)
 - report from Business Committee (Mr Hanley, revised draft attached)
 - (probably) general discussion of points arising

- ? 12.45 - break for lunch

- ? 2.15 - afternoon session: presentations from party leaders

- (3.45 - tea served in lounge)
 - agree statement to press and end session

- ? 4.30 - meeting of Business Committee

Leaders' Meeting

3. The Unionist leaders seem to have dropped the idea of seeking to persuade Mr Hume to agree to no further discussion of the constitutional issue in plenary. There was also no mention yesterday of the proposal to drop the Alliance Party.

4. The Secretary of State might take the opportunity to seek support for the suggestion that he and the party leaders should aim to meet (at the end of) each talks day.

5. If the question of flexibility over the length of the interval in Conference meetings is raised, the Secretary of State might point to:

- (a) the permissive formula, "no further meeting...before the week beginning 27 July; and

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- (b) Mr Andrews' remark at the post-IGC press conference: "if the talks are making substantial progress and there is unanimous agreement as between the parties, there is no reason to suggest for one moment that a week or two additionally might not be added on to the end of the three month period".

Administrative arrangements

6. There appear to have been one or two minor hitches during the party delegates' "checking in" visits to Parliament Buildings over the past two days: we will of course be working hard to ensure no recurrence, but there may be one or two grumbles.

7. Mr Molyneux forgot to mention to the Secretary of State yesterday his desire to increase the UUP delegation to twelve. We have advised the UUP to raise this in the Business Committee. [Subject to the Secretary of State's views, Mr Hanley might take the line that we have no difficulty in accrediting 12 delegates, but hold the line that there should only be 3 plus 4 in the Conference Room (or 10 on the rare occasions when full delegations are paraded), but HMG will not pay more than ten talks allowances and subsistence claims per party per day.]

Leaders' Presentations

8. Last year the other parties were given a formal opportunity to cross-question the party leaders on their opening submissions (which were read out and then circulated). The aim (see the Workplan) was "clarificatory", to ensure everyone understood what had been said rather than to get into substance, but some of the

questioning had a considerable edge. The Secretary of State might aim to avoid any over-formal exchanges, but it could be helpful to invite general questions on the leaders' presentations from those around the table.

SIGNED: David Hill

D J R Hill
Constitutional and Political Division
OAB Ext 6591

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POLITICAL TALKS: PLENARY MEETING - WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 1992

Report by Mr Hanley of the Business Committee meeting held on 9 March 1992

1. The previous Minister of State chaired a meeting of the Business Committee on the afternoon of 9 March, after the plenary sessions had been completed. (A note of that meeting, together with notes of the plenary sessions, was circulated to delegations a few days later).

Venues for strand 1

2. It was the view of the Business Committee that strand 1 discussions should normally take place in Belfast although, to provide an element of flexibility they could, if convenient to all participants, also be held in London if necessary. Agreed?

Format and frequency of plenary meetings

3. The Business Committee took the view that, as with the talks last year, there should be three people per delegation seated at the conference table during plenary sessions, plus 4 per delegation behind. So far as the scheduling of meetings was concerned, it was the view that talks should normally be held from Monday to Wednesday each week, although there would be flexibility to go beyond that if the delegations agreed that a bigger commitment would be useful. Agreed on both points?

Gap

4. All the parties indicated that they were prepared to work into August if necessary, but expressed a preference for an end date in July. They suggested a mechanism whereby, if the two Governments found it acceptable, they could agree to ask for the end of gap

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conference to be moved back. These recommendations were considered by the two Governments and are reflected in the agreement that emerged from the IGC on Monday.

Future Business

5. The Committee recommended that the talks should pick up with further discussion of Item 6 of the Workplan for Strand 1 (further copies are available for circulation). The Government was also invited to prepare a paper drawing together the common themes which were emerging from the previous talks. It was envisaged that the paper would pull together the threads of the discussions which took place last year and provide a foundation for taking business forward. That paper was circulated to the party leaders on Friday by the Secretary of State but it has been suggested that it needs a little more work done on it to ensure that it fully reflects the various points in the parties' papers of 28 June.

The way Ahead

6. Subject to the wishes of this plenary session I suggest that we now proceed to invite the party leaders, in turn, to give short presentations in which they can re-emphasise points of particular importance to them and draw attention to any relevant developments since the previous talks.

7. I further propose that the Business Committee should then be convened to consider any administrative and timetabling points which may arise and to provide the parties with an opportunity to indicate the type of changes they would like to see made to the 'Realities and Common Themes' paper. The Government Team would undertake to get a revised version round to members of the Business Committee by the weekend, with a view to a further meeting of the Committee next Monday morning to consider the draft and, I hope, agree that it should be tabled for plenary discussion on Tuesday 5 May.

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