

To: Monica McWilliams
From: Brendan McAllister
Date: Wednesday 8 April 1998

Dear Monica,

Further to our telephone call, regarding unionist difficulties with the Mitchell document -

1. There are a multiplicity of issues, all jumbled up. They need to be sorted into a more orderly list, and divided into categories such as:

- ✓ **Substance:** - issues relating to the core proposals.
- ✓ **Balance:** - issues to do with concerns that the document gives too much weight to some things and not enough to others.
- ✓ **Tone/Presentation:** - issues concerning particular words or phrases which cause alarm or give offence.

It would be useful to make an inventory of the issues (complaints) and decide which category each comes under.

2. Processing the Issues:

It might be useful to hold bilaterals wherein discussions ask hypothetical questions such as -

'What if this Strand Two proposal was changed in this direction, how might that affect you?'

It could be good to have discussions about each other's dilemmas.

E.g.: Get republicans to consider some of the unionist dilemmas and for them to generate ideas from a unionist perspective (thereby encouraging collaborate thinking) -

A sample dilemma:

'If the UUP says 'Yes' to this document what are the pluses and minuses for the UUP?'

'If they say 'no', what are the pluses and minuses for them?'

'What can everyone do to address these difficulties for them?'

3. It would be more productive to tackle the lesser issues first and relatively quickly. Movement on lesser issues would help build a cross-party dynamic towards joint problem solving.

4. Shared Interpretation:

Could the parties agree to comment publicly on certain matters using the same terminology or applying the same interpretation, while in other respects they could take different views without undermining the core agreement?

5. Building Confidence:

Perhaps a schedule could be added to the document detailing ways in which the various parties would demonstrate their commitment over the next year, thereby decreasing unionist fears that this is a 'take it or leave it' moment but, rather, an opportunity to agree political parameters for a process that now would go into another phase. Think less of this being a peace deal (event) but, rather, a deal for building peace (process).