

Office of the Independent Chairmen

Castle Buildings Stormont Belfast BT4 3SG Northern Ireland
Telephone 01232 522957 Facsimile 01232 768905

MEMBERS

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE ON MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 1997 AT 1030

CHAIRMAN: General de Chastelain
Mr Holkeri

THOSE PRESENT: British Government
Irish Government

Alliance
Labour
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Progressive Unionist Party
Sinn Féin
Social Democratic and Labour Party
Ulster Democratic Party
Ulster Unionist Party

Item 1 - Minutes of 19 November

These were agreed as circulated.

Item 2 - Liaison Sub-Committee - Discussion on Numbers of Delegates, Supporters, Alternates and Speakers at Future Meetings

Following a discussion, the Committee agreed that the previous arrangements of parties being able to field two delegates (not necessarily elected) plus two others in support (three in support in the case of both Governments) should continue. It was, however, agreed that a common sense approach be adopted in terms of the rotation of speakers, to allow for either specific expertise to be present or for absences during the session, so long as the total number of people in attendance and mandated to speak did not exceed four (or five). It was also agreed that any new attendees to the Sub-committees

could avail of nameplates from TAU to enable the efficient conduct of proceedings by the relevant Chairmen and that the Independent Chairmen's staff be apprised of such changes when appropriate.

Item 3 - Liaison Sub-Committees - Confirmation of Dates for Next Meetings

It was highlighted that on Monday 15 December, a Plenary sub group meeting was scheduled for 1030 and a Liaison Sub-Committee on Confidence Building Measures for 1500. Following some discussion, which gave rise to the issue of Westminster business on the same day, the Chairman agreed to consult with Senator Mitchell regarding the timing of both the Plenary sub group meeting and any subsequent Review Plenary meeting and report further to the participants. It was also agreed that a further meeting of the Liaison Sub-Committee on Decommissioning be held on Wednesday 14 January at 1430.

Item 4 - Scheduling of Strand Two Meetings on London and Dublin

The two sets of dates circulated on 5 December by both Governments were approved in principle subject to the details of the exact format being worked out. The Committee recommended that the period in both locations be used both fully and expeditiously in terms of the business transacted. The Committee also recommended that further consultation and liaison take place between both Governments and the parties in relation to the planning and business aspects of both periods. The UUP expressed considerable concern over the purely symbolic nature of the proposed visits, notwithstanding the rules of procedure, and asked to be provided with details of the additional costs incurred for both periods.

Item 5 - Any Other Business

The Chairman reminded members of this weeks schedule including the noon deadline on 12 December for submission of optional papers on social and economic issues for the Liaison Sub-committee on 15 December. The Committee agreed to leave the actual progression of the Sub-committee's business to its Chairman.

Item 6 - Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Business Committee meeting would take place at the call of the Chair and no later than 1030 on 17 December, following the conclusion of the Review Plenary, provided the latter had not itself decided on the scheduling and format of the meetings to be held immediately following the Christmas break.

**Independent Chairmen Notetakers
9 December 1997**

bcmi/06/97