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From: Independent Chairmen Notetakers  
1 July 1996

SUMMARY RECORD OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES AND  
AGENDA FOR PLENARY SESSION - THURSDAY 27 JUNE 1996 (14.00)

Those present:

Independent Chairmen	Government Teams	Parties
Senator Mitchell	British Government	Alliance Party
General de Chastelain	Irish Government	Labour Party
Mr Holkeri		Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
		Progressive Unionist Party
		Social Democratic and Labour Party
		Ulster Democratic Party
		Ulster Democratic Unionist Party
		United Kingdom Unionist Party
		Ulster Unionist Party

1. Most of the participants assembled at 14.00. Several of the parties were not present. At 14.15 Ms Hinds raised the non-presence of "certain parties" with the Chairman. The Chairman said that the policy of the Chairmen was to be tolerant. He understood Ms Hinds impatience in the circumstances. At 14.25 he began the discussions by referring to the "Proposed Additions to the Draft Rules of Procedure (27 June 1996)" and requested the representatives of both Governments to comment on para 2. Mr Thomas said that the proposed amendment filled what would otherwise be a lacuna in the procedures. The Irish Government representatives had nothing to add.

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2. Mr Trimble said that his party found the wording unsatisfactory. There was a contradiction between the statement "Strand 3 will cover relationships between the British and Irish Governments" and the inevitable impact of the inter-governmental deliberations on the peoples of these islands. In effect Strand 3 was not for the two Governments alone and this would need to be recognised. Mr Thomas said that other of the procedural rules provided for involvement of the parties in the Strand 3 deliberations. Mr O'hUiginn said that he had some sympathy with Mr Trimble's view albeit that Strand 3 was concerned with the business of the two Governments. There was, however, a danger in widening the remit of Strand 3 in that it might create a possibility of having to involve the GB and Irish Republic political parties in the strand.

3. Mr McCartney raised the issue of the relationships of the two Governments with the people of Northern Ireland. He said that the Irish Government's relationship with the nationalist people in Northern Ireland was much closer than that of the British Government with the unionist people. He described the Irish Government as an unashamed lobbyist for nationalist interests in Northern Ireland. He said that the British and Irish Governments as members of the European Community should respect each other's boundaries. The British Government had never challenged the Irish Government's claim to sovereignty over the entire island of Ireland (Articles 2-3 of the Irish Constitution) and the interests of the British Government had never been congruent with those of the people of Northern Ireland. He referred to the 1979 United Nations report (the Capritorti Report) which encouraged bilateral agreements between nations in circumstances where one contained a sizeable minority of the other's citizens, on the basis that the national boundaries should be totally respected and the government



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whose minority resided in the other's territory should not interfere in the administration of the territory in question. In his view the Anglo-Irish Agreement was in total violation of these principles. In these circumstances Mr Trimble's point was a valid one.

4. Mr Mallon said that his party believed that the two Governments had roles and responsibility. He criticised the unionist parties for seeking to amend their own amendments. Mr Robinson said that Strand 3 was clearly intended to deal with the relationships of the two Governments, but the narrow confinement of Strand 3 to the two Governments was unsatisfactory. He criticised the use of certain of the terminology employed in the rules, for example, "the island of Ireland" and said that the participants would have to face up to the insidious use of language. It was suggested that the words "and between the peoples of these islands" be added after the word "Governments" on the 5th line of the amendment.

5. Mr Trimble said that the Irish Government was attempting to dictate and control the course of the present proceedings and that this was the primary reason for the past three weeks of dissension. He went on to refer to the British regionalisation policy. In this context the British Government would be embarrassed by the issues raised at the Strand 3 deliberations. For his party the most important issue was to replace the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The unionist people did not wish to be mere spectators during the Strand 3 deliberations.

6. Mr O'hUiginn said that it was quite clearly intended that the parties should be involved in Strand 3. Dr Alderdice said that what was presently happening was that the unionist parties were



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trying to unstitch previous discussion. Strand 3 was not intended to be a means of unstitching the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

7. The Chairman said that in view of the commitment to close the discussions at 15.00 he would have to switch the discussion to consideration of next week's schedule. He first suggested that the participants should attempt to begin each meeting on time. The Chairmen would continue to allow a few minutes' grace for all parties to assemble but after a maximum of ten minutes proceedings would be commenced. All parties agreed to the Chairman's proposal.

8. The Chairman said of those who had responded to his request for information on a schedule which would suit the participants many supported the Monday to Thursday arrangement. For next week he proposed that the participants meet at 13.00 on Monday, and commence at 10.00 on each of the other days, with full days on Tuesday and Wednesday and a finishing time no later than 17.00 on Thursday. Mr Robinson said that he would not be present at all next week because of a foreign trip. His party would have difficulty on Thursday. Mr McCartney said that some of the participants were MPs with parliamentary commitments and suggested that the Thursday meeting should be 09.00 to 13.00.

9. The Chairman briefly conferred with Mr Robinson in relation to his party's attendance difficulty. After giving an assurance to the participants that there would not be a Plenary session on Thursday he proposed that the participants meet at 13.00 on Monday, 10.00 on Tuesday and Wednesday and 10.00-14.00 on Thursday. He emphasised the need for a sustained effort. The participants agreed to the schedule. Mr Smyth requested that the Chairman consider stopping at 19.00 on Monday-Wednesday.



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10. The Chairman requested participants by the close of the session on Monday to submit proposed schedules to him for discussions beyond next week. He then adjourned the discussions at 15.00.

[Signed]

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