

FROM: J McKERVILL
Talks Secretariat
24 June 1996

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L,B&DFP) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (L,B&DENI) - B
PS/Malcom Moss (L,DOE&DHSS) - B
PS/Baroness Denton (L,DED&DANI) - B
PS/PUS (L&B) - B
PS/Sir David Fell - B
Mr Thomas (L&B) - B
Mr Bell - B
Mr Legge - B
Mr Leach (L&B) - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Wood (L&B) - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mr Currie - B
Mr Hill (L&B) - B
Mr Lavery - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Perry - B
Mr Stephens - B
Ms Checksfield - B
Miss Harrison (L&B) - B
Ms Mapstone - B
Mr Whysall (L&B) - B
Ms Collins, Cab Office via IPL-B
Mr O'Mahony, TAU - B
Mr Lamont, RID - B
HMA Dublin - B
Mr Westmacott (via RID) - B
Mr Campbell-Bannerman - B
Mrs McNally (L&B) - B

FILE NOTE

TALKS: MORNING OF 24 JUNE 1996

Summary

Pursuit of revised Rules of Procedure further complicated by the introduction by the UUP of various possible formulations to ensure that the outcome of the negotiations cannot be predetermined and will take precedence over any previous agreement. Delayed resumption of full conferral meeting. UUP to pursue their suggested amendments with the SDLP and Irish.

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Detail

2. The morning began with the British team, led by the Secretary of State and Michael Ancram, the briefing De Chastelain and Holkeri on the bilaterals at the end of the previous week. As envisaged then, the Chairman was advised to aim to adjourn the 1000 meeting almost immediately, following which revised Rules of Procedure, under the Chairman's name, could be circulated in advance of a resumed session at 1200.

3. After 5 minutes the Irish team joined the meeting, led by Mervyn Taylor, Dermot Gleeson and Hugh Coveney. Michael Ancram repeated the outcome of the bilaterals he had held with the parties on 20 June on the rules of procedure, making it clear that the opening plenary agenda had not been covered in those discussions. He believed we were close to having a package which met the different needs of the participants but did not damage the integrity of Ground Rules. The Ground Rules remained the statutory description for the negotiations.

4. He reported one overhanging aspect, namely the desire of the UUP to have an overarching statement included in the revised rules which made it clear that the outcome of the negotiations would not be predetermined and not governed in its nature by any agreement or document which had preceded the negotiations. He reported that the revised para 17A had been shown to the UUP and noted that, despite Irish fears on Thursday, the concept of revised rules had not leaked over the weekend.

5. In reply, the Irish confirmed to the Independent Chairmen that the Irish accepted the idea of revised rules containing elements of Ground Rules in different language provided:

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- the continuing categorical commitment of the two Governments to the Ground Rules;

- anything adopted from the Ground Rules must relate solely to procedural aspects; and

- the revised Rules of Procedure must be consistent with the Ground Rules.

Having seen a revised version of 17A that morning, amended following Michael Ancram's meeting with the UUP on 20 June, the Irish confirmed they could live with it.

6. At 1000 Mr Holkeri opened the conferral session, which was adjourned 10 minutes later, in order to allow circulation of revised Rules in advance of a 1200 resumption.

7. Immediately following the adjournment, the British team, led by Secretary of State and Michael Ancram, met the UUP, represented by Trimble, Empey, Weir and, later, by John Taylor. The UUP were handed a copy of the revised Rules. After commenting on a number of proposed changes and, making suggestions for further change to paras 15 and 20, Trimble commented that para 17A, particularly the first and final sentences were unnecessary and quite unhelpful. Simply put, Empey explained that what the UUP required was a statement to the effect that whatever agreement was reached in the negotiations, it would not be constrained or linked to any other agreement. He read out three possible formulations. After some discussion, it was agreed that he would finalise these and let the British team have them. Various formulations were given to the British team at 1145.

8. Michael Ancram then noted that, if possible, he would welcome discussion of the agenda of the opening Plenary later in the day, in order to counter claims from McCartney that the negotiations were only cosmetic and that HMG was ducking consideration of the main issues. Trimble confirmed that the UUP were prepared to go as far

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as possible in agreeing the Rules of Procedure. If they could not go the whole way, then they were happy to park the Rules and go on to consider the agenda. His only concern was to question the wisdom of proceeding to discuss the agenda with Holkeri in the Chair.

9. The meeting ended at 1040. At 1230 a further meeting took place between the British team and the UUP, with the same cast. Discussion focussed principally on the formulations which the UUP had submitted to the Government. Empey stressed that they had shown the formulation to both the DUP and UKUP in the hope of getting those parties at least half into the nest. Consequently these draft versions could be further amended. To confuse matters further Trimble then produced a further draft formulation which he said were the words he had used with Dr Paisley in their meeting earlier. The UUP team confirmed that the formulation would replace the whole of para 17A of the Rules of Procedure. They hoped to see the Irish and SDLP shortly to discuss with them their suggested formulations. When questioned by the Secretary of State about which of the formulations was their preference, the UUP delegation said that further discussion internally would be necessary before deciding on which one they favoured.

10. The British team noted that para 17A allowed for any aspect of the three relationships to be raised by participants in the negotiations. Did the UUP not wish to retain that? In reply the UUP said that not everyone accepted there were only three relationships to be examined. Rather, with an overarching formulation, it would be open for any participant to raise anything and the UUP would favour that to a more prescriptive rule. Trimble further argued that it would not be helpful to have in the Rules statements which might predetermine the agenda.

11. The meeting broke up with the UUP intent on meeting both the SDLP and the Irish Government delegation to discuss the formulations.

Signed.

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