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POLITICAL AFFAIR
DIVISION
21 JUN 1996
N.I.O. BELFAST

FROM: WILLIAM STEVENSON
Talks Secretariat
20 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

J. McKEE

R. GUTHRIE

J. ELACK

A. McVIE

26/6

**MINISTER OF STATE'S MEETING WITH THE PROGRESSIVE UNIONIST PARTY:
20 JUNE 1996**

The meeting began at 12.55 pm and was attended by Mr Ervine and Mr Spence.

Mr Ervine said that the PUP considered the debate on the Ground Rules to be minor. The more important issue was the role of the Chairman. They wanted the powers of the Chairman to be maintained. Mr Ervine did not see a link between the powers of the Chairman and Northern Ireland's constitutional position.

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The Minister agreed, and said that we were in the "position taking stage". We needed a workable set of rules which allowed the Chairman to do his job.

Mr Ervine said that Mitchell as an independent Chairman is vital to the decommissioning problem and that the PUP would not wish to close the door on the IRA's participation - Sinn Fein cannot be excluded permanently.

The Minister confirmed that it was the two Governments' intention to implement Mitchell.

Mr Spence said that confidentiality between the PUP and HMG to date had been impeccable, and that the PUP could reveal more of their position if they knew the "end game".

The Minister said that the end game was to find a way to implement the Mitchell Report and ultimately to find an accommodation for all sections in Northern Ireland.

Mr Ervine said that the PUP had a volatile community and that they were fearful of the process collapsing. They were annoyed by the Chief Constable's comments today that another bomb could put the loyalists "over the edge". While PUP agreed that Trimble needs bolstered against the DUP/UKUP they would not wish the Ulster Unionists to have the luxury of excluding Sinn Fein indefinitely. Mitchell must have authority and the process without Sinn Fein is devalued.

The Minister said that the pendulum of accommodation will swing throughout the process.

Mr Ervine thought that the two Governments, SDLP and the Ulster Unionists should be able to accept a composite document on procedures.

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The Minister said that he hoped that work over the next few days would resolve the Ground Rules issue once and for all.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm.

(Signed) All participants in the negotiations will take part in good faith, seriously address all aspects of the agreed agenda,

WILLIAM STEVENSON

Talks Secretariat

16. The relevant Chairman will have responsibility for convening, re-scheduling and adjourning meetings and for determining the venue of those meetings having due regard to the views of the Business Committee or, as appropriate, of the relevant participants. It is understood, however, that any delegation may request an adjournment of up to 20 minutes at a time and the Chairman shall refuse such requests only if they are made with unreasonable frequency. (7)

17. The agenda for each meeting of the negotiations shall be settled by the participants on the basis of proposals put forward by the Chairman in accordance with the overall agenda in the relevant format, and taking into account the indicative calendar and the advice of the Business Committee. (20)

18. Where any negotiating team does not attend at a previously agreed time and fails to provide notice of their inability to attend, the Chairman of that meeting and the remaining participants may proceed to conduct the meeting in the absence of that team or teams. If a delegation should withdraw temporarily or permanently from any aspect of the negotiations, the Chairman and the remaining participants will be free to proceed with business with the remaining participants, notwithstanding such withdrawal. (21)

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