

CONFIDENTIAL

3056
POLITICAL AFFAIR
DIVISION
20 JUN 1996
N.I.O. BELFAST

FROM: D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
20 JUNE 1996

cc

PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas(L)
Mr Leach(L+B)
Mr Watkins
Mr Stephens
Mr Lavery
Mr Maccabe
Miss Harrison(L+B)
Mr Whysall(L)

-B
-B
-B
-B
-B
-B
-B
-B

PS/Michael Ancram(L+B) -B 25/6

RULES OF PROCEDURE

To illustrate a possible way forward, I attach a further revision of the rules of procedure which

- incorporates (sometimes a little allusively) all the Ground Rules elements which the Unionists and/or the Irish have indicated they would like to see captured in the rules of procedure
- largely avoids importing Ground Rules language (on the basis that this would arguably call the status of the rest of the Ground rules into question; and should be easier for the Unionists to present as something different from Ground Rules)
- produces a comprehensive, elegantly-drafted operational basis for carrying the negotiations forward without reference to any other document.

2. If we could emerge with something like this it should be possible for the Governments (and SDLP etc) to assert their view of the status of the Ground Rules without requiring the Unionists to concur or giving them a basis for arguing that they have filleted Ground Rules and that the rump of it is effectively redundant. They

CONFIDENTIAL

- 1 -

POLDEVT/278

would have their single rule book; Ground Rules would clearly remain as a distinct, separate, unamended document; and we should have a basis for moving forward.

3. As to handling, it would be highly desirable if the Irish and UUP could do the necessary deal without HMG getting involved. It may nevertheless be helpful to have the attached draft available as a source of drafting suggestions and as an illustration that the approach described by Nora Owen last night can be given effect. We might even float it with the Irish, the UUP (and Peter Robinson?) to see if they find it helpful.

D J R HILL
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
EXT CB 22317

3. The British Government will chair Strand One of the negotiations and the British and Irish Governments will jointly chair Strand Three. Senator George Mitchell, General John de Chastelain and Prime Minister Harri Holkeri will chair the various aspects of the negotiations which require independent chairmanship, as follows:

- Senator Mitchell (Plenary);
- General de Chastelain (Strand Two and the Business Committee); and
- Prime Minister Holkeri (Alternative Chairman for the Plenary and the Business Committee.) (3)

POLDEVT/278

CONFIDENTIAL