

12 JUNE

## NORTHERN IRELAND: MULTI-PARTY TALKS

## Press Statement

The participants in the talks engaged in a round of intensive bilateral exchanges during the day.

In a plenary meeting they agreed the approach to resolving procedural difficulties set out in the attached paper.

At the invitation of the two Governments, Senator Mitchell assumed the chair of the opening plenary session. General de Chastelain and Mr Holkeri were appointed as chairman of Strand 2 and the Business Committee and alternate chairman respectively.

The British and Irish Governments, the Alliance Party, Labour, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, the Progressive Unionist Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the Ulster Democratic Party and the Ulster Unionist Party all confirmed their total and absolute commitment specifically to the principles of democracy and non-violence as set out in paragraph 20 of the report of the International Body.

The participants will meet again this morning to confer on the issues mentioned in paragraph 5 of the attached paper.



12 JUNE 1996  
(00.01PM)

## A POSSIBLE APPROACH TO RESOLVING PROCEDURAL DIFFICULTIES

1. While a number of parties indicated at the 10 June session that they were content with the proposals for the management of business set out in the 6 June papers "Scenario for the opening plenary session", "Procedural Guidelines" and "Draft Agenda", others expressed reservations. These concerns focussed (in particular) on the "Guidelines" paper setting out the procedures which would be operated by the chair during the negotiations, but also covered the appointment of chairmen and the agenda for the opening plenary session.

2. It is believed that, for the orderly transaction of business, it would be beneficial to appoint Independent Chairmen as soon as possible. These appointments having been made, points of concern about the procedural guidelines would then be fully explored, as set out in paragraph 5, and the agenda for the opening plenary session would also be fully considered, and pending resolution of these issues the opening plenary would not move beyond item 4 on the proposed agenda tabled on 6 June.

3. This proposal is put forward in order to underline that the procedural and other arrangements for the opening plenary must be to the satisfaction of the participants. The proposed Independent Chairmen have also authorised the Governments to make clear that they recognise that ultimately agreement in these and all other matters in these negotiations is a matter for the participants.

4. It is therefore proposed that the 12 June meeting should consider the following proposal for the day's business:

1. Appointment to chairmanships of Senator Mitchell (Plenary), General de Chastelain (Strand 2 and Business Committee) and Mr Holkeri (Alternate Chairman) and the handover of the Plenary to the Chairman.



2. Introductory remarks by Chairman.
3. Participants to make formal declaration making clear their total and absolute commitment to International Body's principles of democracy and non-violence.
4. Public statement on behalf of all participants recording total and absolute commitment to principles.

5. At this point the Chairmen, the two Governments and the parties will confer on the points of concern referred to in paragraph 2 on the proposed Procedural Guidelines and on the agenda for the opening plenary set out in the "Scenario" paper. (That agenda in any case envisaged items on the agenda and procedural rules.) It is acknowledged that each of the participants will wish to argue their own point of view and that on this, as on other issues, the negotiations will need to proceed by agreement.

6. The Chairmen will report back to the Plenary on the outcome of the consultations by lunchtime on Wednesday 19 June and the Plenary will then agree on the procedural guidelines, the rest of the agenda for the opening Plenary session, and any other outstanding points.

#### Preliminary encounters

2. I set off for the Prince of Wales gate at Stormont estate when we received word that Sinn Fein's cavalcade had moved off from their assembly point in West Belfast. In fact there was rather longer to wait for their arrival than the first reports indicated and it was a few minutes before their advance guard, in the form of Richard Macaulay plus minder, turned up. The scene at the gates was relatively quiet - there were a few camera crews and photographers around, a healthy but far from intimidating RUC presence and the usual selection of joggers and dog-walkers passing by in what had

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