

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: D J R HILL
Political Development Team
12 June 1996

2976
POLITICAL AFFAIRS
DIVISION
13 JUN 1996
N.O. BELFAST

cc Mr Leach - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Stephens - B
Mr Macgabh - B
Mr Lavery - B
Miss Harrison (B&L) - B
Mr Whysall (B&L) - B
Mr Dickinson - B
Mrs McNally - B

1 Mr McKerr
2 ~~Dr Smyth~~

*I'm working on
all suggestions in para 6.*

Mr Thomas - B

C 7/6

TALKS: KEEPING ALONGSIDE THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMEN

I had a lengthy chat with Martha Pope and David Pozorski yesterday afternoon. David Angel joined us about half way through.

2. They were extremely pleased with the events of the previous few hours, after what had clearly had been a tense couple of days. They attributed the credit to the British Government team: perhaps they say that to everyone, but I think they were being serious. Certainly their subsequent remarks suggested that they had adjusted their views of both the Irish Government and Mr Trimble; and they seemed genuinely impressed by and grateful for our staff work.

3. We had a general discussion about different approaches to negotiation. I explained why we believed that any attempt to prescribe the course of the negotiations would fail; and pointed to the significance of the direct interchanges which had taken place the previous day between the Irish and the UUP. I said that, especially having seen Senator Mitchell in action, we were entirely confident that however much or little formal power he was given under any procedural rules, his consultative facilitating approach was exactly what we needed. Martha said it was his trade mark: he had often driven his own party colleagues wild by continuing to pursue accommodations. It sounds as if he and Peter Brooke are from the same mould.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

4. All three staffers were avid for information and for background texts (on Strand 2 in particular, so far as David Angel was concerned). I provided copies of our latest set of 'key background texts'. I also provided them with 7 seven full sets of key texts from the 1992 talks, accompanied by a health warning that the process, the participants and the circumstances were very different: nevertheless they should find the papers a useful guide to the issues and to where the key players are coming from. David Angel asked if we had a set of Strand 2 minute from the 1992 talks. I said we could provide a set of the formal records, but that we did not have access to Sir Ninian's detailed records. I said we obviously had our own records but they were written from a British Government perspective which might unfairly colour their perceptions: David Angel took the point but nevertheless seemed very keen to have copies. Subject to your views (and a quick glance to check they contain nothing best obscured) I am inclined to let him have them. [Action: Diane, could you please arrange to pull together a set of the formal records of Strand 2 and of our internal records of Strand 2 meetings, which we might briefly review before handing to Mr Angel (discreetly) early next week.]

5. They were also keen to have an analysis of the parties and key players. They candidly acknowledged that they knew the PUP and UDP very well but not the other Unionist parties. I gently deflated their expectations of the loyalist parties and gave them a thumbhail analysis of Unionism, the UUP and David Trimble. Various lights began to dawn. I encouraged them to cultivate contacts with Robinson, Empey and Donaldson. Further background and advice of this character would be enormously well received, and helpful to them: perhaps Chris could make an arrangement to give a few indepth briefings, perhaps off site, on non-talks days).

6. The ostensible purpose of my call on them was to check on their general comfort and well-being and discuss a couple of practical points. Mr Dickinson will show them round the whole of Block B later today and discuss the configuration of the conference room for Monday's and Tuesday's meetings. Mr Whysall is doing a note on the distinctions between 'negotiators' and 'supporters'; the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

TAU will provide the logistic support for copying documents on Friday afternoon; I mentioned that we had a second note-taker if their current team proved insufficient; etc. All most gratefully received. Just at that point the Secretary of State entered at his most solicitous for their comfort and convenience....

7. One at least of our handling plan objectives is being achieved.

8. For obvious reasons I am not giving this minute a wide circulation.

Signed

D J R HILL
Political Development Team

1. This is to propose that the Secretary of State should write to the leaders of the parties in the talks, setting out that he has disconnected of all sound 'feeds' leading outside the main Conference room.

2. In response to a question Dr Paisley had raised in the pre-plenary session, the Secretary of State wrote to him (with a copy to other delegation leaders) on Monday about sound feeds from the talks, in the terms attached. Unfortunately, it has become clear since the earlier advice was provided that a further connection had been put in place, to the Stormont Castle press office.

3. With the Prime Ministers' visit over and the Independent Chairmen in the chamber, there would be less inconvenience now in discontinuing the feeds; and doing so might help allay suspicions among delegations, and permit us more readily to assert that the talks are meant to be confidential. It was in fact arranged for them to be taken out of use last night (before the independent Chairman took over). If the Secretary of State agrees they should remain disconnected, he may wish to write to Dr Paisley and other delegation heads.

CONFIDENTIAL

BB/POLDEVT/161