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

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

cc
J. McKEVILL
P. SMITH
J. BLACK
A. McVEIGH
26/6
PS/Secretary of State(L+B) -B

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

RULES OF PROCEDURE

This morning's bilaterals with the UUP, the Irish Government and SDLP suggest there is likely to be convergence on a proposal that

- the rules of procedure should be developed to include the substance of the procedural elements in Ground Rules, so that they can stand as a self sufficient and comprehensive rule book
- the language should where possible differ from that in Ground Rules, to make it easier to argue that the latter remains inviolate
- the two Governments (and any anyone else who wanted to) would make clear their commitment to the Ground Rules but the Unionists would not be required to acquiesce in that.

2. With Michael Ancram's approval I have given the attached draft to the Irish to illustrate what might be possible. I have separately circulated a revision of the statement which HMG might make about its view of the Ground Rules.

(Signed)

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POLDEVT/286

(20 June)

DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. These rules of procedure are adopted for the substantive all-party negotiations and can only be amended by agreement, in accordance with the decision-making process outlined in paragraphs 23 through 28.(17)

[? Basis]

Structure of Negotiations

2. The negotiations will be structured so as to ensure that all issues will be addressed in a coherent and efficient manner in three interlocking strands, reflecting the three key relationships at issue, with appropriate distinctions as to participation and procedural arrangements. Strand One will cover relationships within Northern Ireland and involve the British Government and the participating political parties; Strand Two will cover relationships within the island of Ireland and involve both Governments and the participating political parties; and Strand Three will cover relationships between the British and Irish Governments and be conducted by the two Governments. Additionally all participants may meet as necessary in Plenary session and will be represented on a Business Committee.
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, Strand Two and the Business Committee).(3)

4. Where appropriate, other committees and sub-committees of the negotiations may be established among the participants in the format to which the sub-group relates. Committees and sub-committees shall be chaired by the relevant Chairman or, by agreement among the participants in that format, by a person nominated by the Chairman.(6)

Role and Responsibility of Chairmen

5. The designated Chairmen shall preside over all the business of the negotiations and will exercise their functions impartially at all times.(9)
6. The Chairmen will moderate in all meetings to allow an opportunity for full discussion of issues on the agenda, guided by the aim of securing agreement of as broad a spectrum of participation as is possible, and doing so as expeditiously and efficiently as possible.(9)
7. All Chairmen will operate within these rules of procedure, and have due regard to the views of the Business Committee on the arrangement of business and the exercise of their functions.(9)
8. The Chairmen will be bound by the same requirement for confidentiality as participants.(9)
9. The Chairmen may bring forward specific suggestions, but only after consultation with the relevant delegations to establish that it would be regarded as helpful.(9)

Sequence of the Negotiations

10. Following the conclusion of the Opening Plenary, the appropriate Chairmen will convene meetings of the negotiations within the three strands and any sub-committees, subject to co-ordination with the Business Committee.(7, 15)

11. The Independent Chairman of the Plenary may convene further meetings of the Plenary if he considers such meetings to be necessary in the light of developments across the negotiations as a whole. He shall, in addition, convene further plenary meetings at the request of the Business Committee.(16)

Business Committee

12. The Business Committee shall comprise up to two representatives of each participating delegation.(19)
13. The Business Committee shall establish and maintain an indicative calendar for the negotiations as a whole and within the various formats. The timing and duration of meetings in the various formats shall be determined by the relevant Chairman, having due regard to the views of the participants, in accordance with this calendar. However, unless otherwise agreed by the Business Committee, negotiating sessions in different strands, or within strands, will not be held simultaneously, to allow participants, if they so wish, the option of fielding the same negotiating team throughout the negotiations.(19)
14. The Business Committee will be available to advise the Chairmen on the day-to-day exercise of their responsibilities and to facilitate communication between participating delegations and the Chairmen.(19)

Conduct of the Proceedings

15. Participants will negotiate in the various formats, committees and sub-committees, on the basis of the comprehensive agenda for the negotiations as a whole, adopted in the Opening Plenary, as it relates to their area of competence. That agenda will include all the significant