

Office of the Independent Chairmen

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MEMBERS

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 1998 AT 1300

CHAIRMEN: General de Chastelain
Mr Holkeri

THOSE PRESENT: British Government
Irish Government

Alliance
Labour
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Progressive Unionist Party
Social Democratic and Labour Party
Ulster Democratic Party
Ulster Unionist Party

Item 1 - Minutes of Previous Meeting (4 February)

These were approved as circulated.

Item 2 - Extending the "Talks" Working Week

Following a short discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the various Strand Chairmen that the use of available time be maximised on each of the three normal working days between 1030 and 1730. In addition the Committee agreed to recommend that "doubling up" of meetings should occur thus permitting Liaison Sub-committees and Strands meetings to be scheduled simultaneously or at overlapping times. Furthermore it was agreed that extending talks business into a fourth working day be retained as an alternative for future consideration but not implemented now.

Item 3 - Scheduling of Next Review Plenary

The Committee agreed that the Chairman of the Plenary should be asked to seek the views of participants on this issue during the course of business in the week commencing 2 March.

Item 4 - Scheduling Arrangements for the Week Commencing 2 & 9 March

The Committee agreed to recommend the following schedule for the week commencing 2 March.

Monday 2 March

Cross Strand meeting at 1400. The Committee recommended that an outline agenda should be issued in advance to enable participants to make suitable arrangements regarding attendees etc.

Tuesday 3 March

Strand Two meeting at 1030. The Committee agreed to recommend that future business be conducted for planning purposes, where possible, in two sessions 1030-1330 and 1430-1730. It was also noted that President Santer would be visiting Castle Buildings at 0900 that morning.

Wednesday 4 March

Strand One meeting at 1030-1330 and 1430-1730. Liaison Sub-committee on Confidence Building Measures at 1030 (for up to 3 hours)..

Monday 9 March

Strand One meeting at 1030-1330 and 1430-1730. Liaison Sub-committee on Decommissioning at 1030 (for up to 3 hours).

Tuesday 10 March

Strand Two meeting at 1030-1330 and 1430-1730. Liaison Sub-committee on Confidence Building Measures at 1030 (for up to 3 hours).

Wednesday 11 March

Strand Three Liaison meeting at 0930. Further Cross Strand meeting - (timing to be confirmed following meeting on 2 March).

It was noted that business in the week commencing 16 March would be disrupted by a bank holiday on 17 March and functions occurring in the USA. The Committee agreed to recommend that no specific business be scheduled for that week but noted that bilaterals may take place..

Item 5- Any Other Business

Labour suggested that, given the available time left for the process, every effort should be made to ensure that exchanges in Strand meetings be focused on substantive issues.

Item 6 - Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed that this should occur at the call of the Chair with a meeting most likely taking place in the week commencing 9 March.

**Independent Chairmen Notetakers
25 February 1998**