

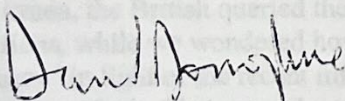
Confidential

Summary Report (22 July)

1. Bilateral contacts took place this morning. The Government delegation, led by the Minister for Justice, had meetings with the British Government and the Chairmen. The afternoon and early evening were devoted to a lengthy debate on the Drumcree crisis (the "blood-letting" session granted by Senator Mitchell under pressure from Paisley).
2. Bilaterals resumed after this debate and are to continue throughout tomorrow. The Chairmen have signalled their intention to circulate tomorrow, in the light of these bilaterals, a composite draft of the rules of procedure setting out their best judgement of where consensus may be found on this text. Earlier today, they circulated a document summarising key outstanding disagreements (no progress has been made in this respect since last Thursday).
3. Delegations are also being asked to address the plenary agenda in their bilateral contacts.
4. Senator Mitchell flagged this afternoon his intention to convene in the course of Wednesday a full session in the informal format with a view to proceeding to the taking of decisions on both texts, if necessary by sufficient consensus.
5. The two Governments emphasised strongly to him this morning the urgency of making visible progress in the talks this week. We proposed the convening of a Plenary to take the decisions in question and the reaching of agreement on a brisk timetable which would enable progress to be made on the remaining plenary agenda before the summer recess in a manner which would address the concerns expressed by Seamus Mallon over the past few days.
6. We suggested to the Chairman that the convening of a Plenary at this stage would have the effect of concentrating minds and closing the gap still evident between the UUP and the SDLP on the rules. Allowing time for final work on these and on the plenary agenda, we envisaged a Plenary on Wednesday morning which, having taken the decisions in question, would move immediately to opening statements. These might be disposed of very quickly and the decommissioning discussion launched. The British Government floated the idea of a sub-committee on the mechanisms in this regard (item 5c of the draft agenda) which would be tasked to report back with recommendations before the recess, thereby allowing the Plenary to pursue the remaining agenda items.
7. We suggested that, with the necessary political will on all sides, it might be possible, within the five talks days remaining before the scheduled recess (which the Chairman is unwilling to put back), to reach the point of at least initial discussion of the comprehensive agenda for the talks (possibly with the aid of relevant sub-committees). In this way, substantive negotiations could be said to have been

embarked on and the talks would not be breaking off with the prospect of a further procedural wrangle over decommissioning still on the horizon for the autumn.

8. We had earlier underlined to the British Government the need to recruit the UUP fully to this programme of work and the way in which each item would be handled. The Secretary of State reported Trimble as describing the proposed timetable as "tight but possible" in weekend contacts.
9. The Chairman was sympathetic to the proposals made by the two Governments but felt unable to convene the suggested Plenary (because of an understanding with McCartney that no Plenary would be convened on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week).
10. In the afternoon, the "blood-letting" debate on Drumcree and its aftermath took place over a five-hour period. The two Governments underlined in separate presentations the importance of taking the key decisions quickly and of moving to substance without further delay. These themes were echoed by most other delegations. The UKUP, the DUP and the UUP responded with varying degrees of stridency to the pressure directed at them. In a heated intervention clearly designed for external consumption (on which he subsequently briefed the media), McCartney said he would not take any lectures from Irish Government Ministers nor conform to a timetable dictated by the two Governments. Robinson and Paisley rejected suggestions of Unionist feet-dragging and blamed the delay on the two Governments' attachment to the ground-rules ("we'd rather get it right than get it quickly").
11. The second half of this lengthy debate involved detailed and fairly predictable presentations by the different parties of their positions on the Drumcree crisis. The interventions by Paisley and McCartney were marked by some sniping with Seamus Mallon, who criticised Orange intimidation and "fascism". This was followed by a more polite discourse between Mallon and Jeffrey Donaldson, who emphasised Orange sincerity and acknowledged the hurt and offence caused to the nationalist community by recent events.
12. The tone of the debate was, on the whole, less recriminatory than had been anticipated and prompted a relieved Sir Patrick to congratulate all concerned at the end of the debate, singling out the Mallon/Donaldson exchange. As usual, British officials seized on this marginal atmospheric improvement as an encouraging portent.



David Donoghue
22 July 1996