

LF

FROM: G HARRISON
 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
 30 JULY 1996

cc: PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B
 PS/PUS (B&L) - B
 PS/Sir David Fell - B
 Mr Thomas - B
 Mr Legge - B
 Mr Bell - B
 Mr Blackwell - B
 Mr Leach - B
 Mr Watkins - B
 Mr Ray - B
 Mr Beeton - B
 Mr Hill (B&L) - B
 Mrs Madden, FSD - F
 Mr Stephens - B
 Mr Maccabe - B
 Mr Whysall - B
 Mr Jones, FSD - F
 Dr Smyth, PAB - B
 Mr Dickinson - B
 Mr O'Mahony - B
 Mrs McNally (B&L) - B

1. PS/PUS (B&L) - B ("I agree with Miss Harrison's recommendations that we should offer 5-day access, and that we stick to the original remuneration package"). 31/7/96
2. PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

TALKS: ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUGUST 1996

The purpose of this submission is to seek the Secretary of State's views on the arrangements during the summer break until talks resume on 9 September. Arrangements during the summer recess would need to cover remuneration to delegates in the light of the Chairman's announcement on Thursday 4 July that that Castle Buildings would be available on Mondays and Tuesdays for the purpose of informal bilaterals during the 5-week summer break.

2. Castle Buildings will in fact remain open throughout the week in August between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, when it will be manned by TAU staff. Our original proposal was to allow the parties to use the building when they chose, but to offer them only a limited remuneration. Mr Leach's submission of 3 July proposed offering

each party six half day delegates loss of earnings allowances of £50 in each of the weeks the building was open for bilaterals (ie a maximum of £300 per party per week; together with £100 party allowance per week (as opposed to the present £300 per day).

3. There are two issues for consideration:

(a) Whether to limit delegates' access to Castle Buildings to Mondays and Tuesdays in August, or to allow access throughout the week.

(b) Whether the remuneration offered to delegates should be either reduced from the original proposal to take account of such a two day limit, or remain the same.

Discussion

(a) Access to Castle Buildings

4. As the building will be open anyway throughout the summer break there would be no savings in running costs if delegates' access is limited to Mondays and Tuesdays. If a weekly limit on loss of earnings allowances and party support grant is retained, again there would be no savings in limiting access. Thus the only possible difference in costs incurred if five day a week access is provided, is on travel and subsistence payments to delegates. This is discussed in paragraphs 8 - 10 below.

(b) Remuneration

5. If a two day limit was placed on delegates' access, the present proposal of a £300 weekly limit on loss of earnings would enable a party to field 3 elected delegates for one full day or two half days, or other combinations to suit the party concerned. The proposed party support grant of £100 per week would also enable parties to pay a non-elected negotiator or support work for 1 full

day or 2 half days. To reduce the amounts on offer would curtail this room for manoeuvre, particularly of the smaller parties, even over a 2 day period. The UDP have made enquiries about August payments and were given an outline of our proposals. They took the view that the party support grant should be increased to £100 per day, ie £200 per week. on travel and subsistence making the total cost for the 5 weeks - £71,155.25.

6. Mr Leach's submission of 3 July indicated that details of travel and subsistence allowances would be for further consideration. During the course of Thursday 4 July, it was agreed with the Irish, and approved by PUS, that we should offer to pay travel and subsistence to those delegates attending Castle Buildings under these arrangements, together with up to 3 support staff per day. This is half the number of support staff permitted to claim on a normal negotiating day. Again to reduce this number of support staff further would restrict the smaller parties who rely more heavily on non-elected support staff.

(c) Costs

7. The estimated total cost of paying the proposed limited loss of earnings allowance and party support grant to 9 parties for 5 weeks in August is £18,000. As there is a weekly limit, the same figure would apply whether the delegates had access to the building for five or only two days per week.

(b) Remuneration

8. It was originally envisaged that travel and subsistence could be claimed by those attending Castle Buildings under these arrangements ie only on those days for which loss of earnings is claimed. In these circumstances, travel and subsistence is estimated to cost £14,175 for the whole 5 weeks, (assuming six delegates per week and three party support workers claiming for two days a week). This would make total expenditure of £32,175 for 5 weeks. This figure would apply also if access to the Building was limited to two specified days a week. Tuesday of each week. The Castle Buildings office facilities would be available for use by parties for the

9. If the building was open to delegates for five days a week and 6 delegates per day and 3 party support workers per day were permitted to claim travel subsistence for all five days, regardless of whether they were days on which loss of earnings are party support grants were claimed the estimated cost would be £53,156.25 - a considerable increase of £38,981.25 on travel and subsistence making the total cost for the 5 weeks - £71,156.25.

10. Alternatively, the delegates could be allowed access to the building for five days a week, but only be permitted to claim travel and subsistence, and the other allowance on Mondays and Tuesdays when engaging in bilaterals etc. They would still receive the free use of the office facilities for the other three days.

Recommendation

(a) Access to Castle Buildings

11. Subject to the views of PUS, since the building will be open in any event during August, there seems no reason to limit delegates access to two days a week, although, in accordance with the Chairman's announcement, it would be reasonable to assume that any bilaterals would take place on those two days. Also a Government contact would only be available on Mondays and Tuesdays.

(b) Remuneration

12. Also subject to the views of PUS, it is recommended that we retain our original remuneration proposals for loss of earnings allowances and party support grant (£300 per week and £100 per week respectively) but make it clear that these can only be claimed for Mondays and Tuesdays on each week. Additionally I recommend that we limit travel and subsistence claims to a maximum of six delegates per week as well as limiting it to three party support workers per day for the Monday and Tuesday of each week. The Castle Buildings office facilities would be available for use by parties for the

remainder of the week for work connected with the negotiations but no allowances or expenses would be payable for those attending on those days.

13. The Irish side are agreeable to this approach.

14. A draft note to heads of delegations is attached. This has been revised to take account of Senator Mitchell's announcement on 4 July. The draft note has been agreed by the Irish who are considering their arrangements for Government representatives to be contactable over the summer.

Signed.

G Harrison (Miss)
Political Development Team
30 July 1996

TO HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

BLOCK B CASTLE BUILDINGS - ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUGUST 1996

At the meeting on Thursday 4 July, the Chairman announced that Castle Buildings would remain open on Mondays and Tuesdays during August for the purpose of informal bilateral discussions. This note sets out the arrangements envisaged for Castle Buildings during the period.

2. On weekdays (excluding bank holidays) in the weeks commencing:

5 August

12 August

19 August

26 August

2 September

Block B Castle Buildings will be available between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm for use by the parties for work connected with the negotiations. Staffing will however be restricted and some facilities - eg catering - will be available only on a limited basis.

3. In recognition of the Chairman's announcement that the parties will be able to hold informal bilateral consultations on Mondays and Tuesdays in August and/or engage in essential preparatory work requiring access to Castle Buildings and contacts with other participants, in respect of attendance at Castle Buildings on Monday and Tuesday of each week (Tuesday and Wednesday in the week beginning 26 August) funding will be provided as follows:

For each participating party, 6 half day delegates' loss of earnings allowances of £50 will be available for each of the five weeks (ie a maximum of £300 loss of earnings allowance may be claimed per party per week).

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Parties will also be entitled to a party support allowance of £100 for each week in which they engage in such informal consultations.

A maximum of six delegates per week and up to a maximum of 3 support staff per day attending Castle Buildings on Monday and Tuesdays under the above arrangements during each of the 5 weeks indicated will be entitled to claim travel and subsistence.

4. Delegation suites etc will also be available for use by parties from Wednesdays to Fridays for use for work connected with the negotiations but no allowances or expenses will be payable in respect of attendance at Castle Buildings on those days.

5. Representatives of the Governments will be contactable on Mondays and Tuesdays for the purpose of exchanging information and clarifying issues which parties may wish to raise.

THEME: REVISED AGENDA FOR OPENING PLenary

Following receipt of Mr Bell's confirmation that the Irish were content that the two Governments should table the attached proposal, I gave a copy to General de Chastelain.

1. I should be grateful if Mr Bell would let Mr Donoghue know that this has been done.

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3. It may be better not to tell Mr Donoghue that by the time I gave the proposed agenda to General de Chastelain he had discovered that the three Unionist parties did not wish their joint proposal to be circulated (the DUP and UKUP had been asked not to do so but the DUP did not want it circulated unless everyone's proposals were going to be

PETER DICKINSON
Talks Administrator
Talks Administration Unit

Even that, the SDLP prohibition on circulating their proposals so far as any proposals from Alliance, Labour, PUP or DUP, the General only had proposals from the two Governments and the NIOP and was beginning to wonder if it was worth it.

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PCLO573/873

JA/2260/TALKS