

CONFIDENTIAL

SDLP-UUP Meeting on 5 September, 1996

1. I spoke to Mr. Hume and Mr. Farren on the SDLP meeting with the UUP yesterday.
2. The meeting lasted for just over an hour. The UUP were represented by Trimble, Taylor, Empey and a note taker.
3. Discussions concentrated on two main themes: the UUP stressed the importance and potential of agreement between the SDLP and the UUP as the way forward. The SDLP agreed on the capacity of the two parties working in tandem to move things forward. They said they would be very happy to develop bilateral contacts. However, this should be done within the talks process, and to give that process momentum, rather than outside it or as an alternative to it. They agreed to hold a further bilateral with the UUP on Monday morning to consider the issue of the opening agenda.
4. The second theme was decommissioning. Mr. Farren thought there was some softening of the tone of the UUP discussion on this. The UUP flagged their intention to produce a paper on this, but gave no details of it. They complained about the absence of Irish legislation, which they said they had been promised last march. The SDLP suggested that they should take up any complaints in that respect directly with the Irish Government. (I briefed the SDLP on the state of our work on this: I said we would be happy to promise to table the legislation at a very early stage in the substantive subcommittee on decommissioning which we envisaged. They agreed it would be undesirable to table draft legislation in the plenary, both because it might be

"pocketed" and also because it would give an opening for technical discussions of decommissioning in the opening plenary, which would run counter to the goal of establishing the separate "stream" as quickly as possible.)

5. The SDLP and the UUP also had some discussion on how to handle possible moves to exclude the loyalist parties. They were in agreement on the need to get around the problem as quickly as possible, by invoking the procedures which had been agreed.
6. In summary, the meetings seems to have been a useful contact, with a reasonably good atmosphere, but did not involve any firm decisions, other than that to meet on Monday.

Sean Ó hUiginn

6 September 1996

cc: PST
 PSS
 Mr. Teahon
 Mr. Dalton
 ✓ Ambs. London & Washington
 Joint Secretary

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