

NORTHERN IRELAND FORUM

cc:

PS/Secretary of State (B&L)
 PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L)
 PS/Michael Ancram (B&L)
 PS/PUS (B&L)
 PS/Sir David Fell
 Mr Thomas
 Mr Legge
 Mr Bell
 Mr Steele
 Mr Ray
 Mr Leach
 * - Mr Watkins
 Mr Stephens
 Mr Hill
 Mr Perry
 Mr Maccabe
 Mr Beeton
 Mr Carson
 Mr Lavery
 Ms Checksfield
 Miss Harrison
 Mr Whysall

Security Policy & Operations
 Received:

24 JUL 1996

Ref
 Northern Ireland Office

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
 SECURITY POLICY & OPERATIONS 1
 RECEIVED 24 JUL 1996
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 REF.
 NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE (B)

51/010

URGENT

* For advice + draft reply
 by 24-7-96.

Cue (A)

The continued
rules.

At its meeting on 19 July the Forum formally adopted the attached Rules in accordance with paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1994.

As required by sub-paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 2 I am now forwarding these Rules of Procedure to you for approval.

I think it might be helpful if I were to have the opportunity of an early meeting with you for a general discussion on the progress of the work to date.

SOPB/28469/LB

Fax from :

NORTHERN IRELAND FORUM

C/o Annex 1, Block B
Castle Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3SG

Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Stormont Castle
BELFAST
BT4 3ST

23 July 1996

My dear Secretary,

FORUM : RULES OF PROCEDURE

At its meeting on 19 July the Forum formally adopted the attached Rules in accordance with paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1996.

As required in sub-paragraph 3(i) of Schedule 2 I am now forwarding these Rules of Procedure to you for approval.

I think it might be helpful if I were to have the opportunity of an early meeting with you for a general discussion on the progress of the Forum to date.

Yours ever,

John

JOHN GORMAN
Chairman

NC/RJ/138

1. NOMENCLATURE OF FORUM AND DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

(1) The Forum shall be officially known as the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue and shall commonly be referred to as "the Forum".

(2) Membership of the Forum shall not confer any title. Members shall address each other as Mr, Mrs or Ms, or by such professional or honorary title which a Member may indicate.

1. ELECTION NORTHERN IRELAND FORUM

(1) The Chairperson of the Forum shall be elected by the members, but until the first election has taken place, he/she shall be the Secretary of State.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

(2) A member, addressing the Chairperson, may propose a candidate (whether or not a member of the Forum, and whether or not present), to the Forum for its Chairperson and move "That (x) be Chairperson of this Forum", which motion will require to be seconded and to be followed by a statement (which in the case of a Forum Member may be given orally from the candidate proposed and seconded that he/she accepts nomination).

(3) When a candidate is proposed and seconded and has accepted nomination, the Chairperson shall then ask "Is there any further proposal?" and

(a) if there is no further proposal, the Chairperson shall say "The time for proposals has expired" and a debate relevant to the nomination may then take

JULY 1996

A. NOMENCLATURE OF FORUM AND DESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

- (1) The Forum shall be officially known as the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue" and shall normally be referred to as "the Forum".
- (2) Membership of the Forum shall not confer any title. Members shall address each other as Mr, Mrs or Ms, or by such professional or honorary title which a Member may indicate.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

- (1) The Chairperson of the Forum shall be elected by the members, but until the first election has taken place, he/she shall be a member nominated by the Secretary of State.
- (2) A member, addressing the Chairperson, may propose a candidate (whether or not a member of the Forum, and whether or not present), to the Forum for its Chairperson and move "That [x] be Chairperson of this Forum", which motion will require to be seconded and to be followed by a statement (which in the case of a Forum Member may be given orally from the candidate proposed and seconded that he/she accepts nomination.
- (3) When a candidate is proposed and seconded and has accepted nomination, the Chairperson shall then ask "Is there any further proposal?" and
 - (a) if there is no further proposal, the Chairperson shall say "The time for proposals has expired" and a debate relevant to the election may then take

place in which no member may speak more than once;
or

- (b) if more than one candidate is proposed and seconded as Chairperson and has signified that he/she accepts nomination, the Chairperson shall, after each proposal has been made and seconded and the nomination has been accepted, say "Is there any further proposal?", and if there is no further proposal the Chairperson shall say "The time for proposals has expired", and a debate relevant to the election may then take place in which no member shall speak more than once.
- (4) Upon the conclusion of the debate as aforesaid, or, if there is no debate, the Chairperson shall put the question "That [x] (being the only candidate proposed or the candidate first proposed) be Chairperson of this Forum" and shall invite the members when their names are called to indicate by voting according to the procedure laid down in paragraph 13 of these Rules; and the question shall not be regarded as having been carried unless it fulfils the requirements of paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to the 1996 Act:
- (a) no member present has objected to it; or
- (b) it is agreed by at least 75 per cent of those members voting.
- (5) If the question be not carried as aforesaid, the Chairperson shall put a similar question in relation to the second candidate proposed; whereupon, if resolved in the affirmative (as aforesaid), that candidate shall be declared by the Chairperson to be elected and shall forthwith take the chair; and this shall be done in relation to each candidate proposed as often as necessary

until a majority representing at least 75% of those voting has agreed upon a candidate to be their Chairperson.

- (6) If no member is elected as aforesaid, the procedure for election shall be repeated after a period of adjournment specified by the Chairperson (who may wish to consult with members of the Forum, as he sees appropriate, in that period), until a majority representing at least 75% of those voting has agreed upon a candidate to be their Chairperson.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A RULES COMMITTEE

- (1) A committee may be appointed to draw up Rules of Procedure for the efficient conduct of business in the Forum.
- (2) In drawing up such Rules, the Committee shall have regard to the requirement for them to be referred to the Secretary of State for approval; and to the consequent obligation on the Secretary of State to ensure that the Rules as approved are such as will facilitate the promotion of dialogue, understanding and consensus across the various traditions in Northern Ireland.
- (3) The membership of the Committee shall consist of not less than 10 and not more than 16 members appointed by Motion made after notice and shall be such that, so far as is practicable, there is a fair reflection of the parties participating in the Forum, providing that each party is entitled to at least one place.
- (4) The Chairperson of the Forum shall be Chairperson of the Committee.

- (5) In the absence of the Chairperson of the Forum, the Committee may appoint one of their members to act as Chairperson.
- (6) The quorum of the Committee shall be five.
- (7) (a) The Rules Committee of the Forum shall have the power to invite such persons as may be nominated or selected to attend on behalf of any political party represented in the Forum to its meetings and to take part as a participant in the deliberations of the Rules Committee subject to the discretion of the Chairperson. Such a person, if an unelected member, will not have the right to vote on behalf of their respective political party.
- (b) The Committee shall have the power to invite such persons as they may select to attend any of their meetings and to take part in the deliberations of the Committee.
- (8) The Committee shall report to the Forum by a date to be agreed at the time of its appointment.
- (9) For the purpose of considering the report from the Committee, the Forum shall sit on such days and at such times as the Committee, after consultation with the Chairperson, may recommend subject to paragraph 2(4) of Schedule 2 to the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1996.

3. GENERAL RULE FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

- (1) The Forum shall exercise control of its own business, subject to the Chairperson's ruling which shall be final on all questions of procedure and order, including the designation of business motions for purposes of Rule 13.

(2) In carrying out his/her duties under the Rules of Procedure, the Chairperson shall at all times have regard to the need to facilitate the promotion of dialogue, understanding and consensus across the various traditions in Northern Ireland.

(3) The Chairperson shall not be entitled to a vote; save that when the votes are equal, the status quo should be maintained.

4. DEPUTY CHAIRPERSONS

(1) After consulting and obtaining prior consent the Chairperson shall nominate a panel of up to six members, any one of whom may act as Deputy Chairperson when requested to do so by the Chairperson.

(2) Before drawing up his/her nominations for the panel of Deputy Chairpersons, the Chairperson shall consult with the various parties in the Forum to ensure (so far as is possible) that the nominations are representative.

(3) In these Rules of Procedure, references to the Chairperson shall, unless the context otherwise requires, include a Deputy Chairperson acting as Chairperson under this Rule.

5. QUORUM

(1) The quorum of the Forum shall be twenty-two members.

(2) If at any time the attention of the Chairperson is directed by a member to the fact that a quorum is not present, he/she shall cause an announcement to be made; and if at the expiration of three minutes a quorum is then not present, he/she shall adjourn the Forum

forthwith; but if as a result of this summons, a quorum is present, it shall not be in order to draw the attention of the Chairperson to the absence of a quorum for a period of one hour from that time.

6. SITTINGS OF THE FORUM

- (1) A sitting of the Forum shall be constituted when it is presided over by the Chairperson. The Chairperson, at the commencement of each day's business, shall direct that a period of two minutes silence be observed, which Members may spend in personal prayer or meditation. A general announcement shall be made two minutes before the Chairperson takes the Chair at a sitting or a resumed sitting.
- (2) Unless otherwise ordered on a motion made after notice; or unless notification to the contrary is issued by the Secretary of State under paragraph 2(4) of schedule 2 to the 1996 Act, the Forum shall meet at 10.00 am on each sitting day, as determined by the Chairperson in consultation with the Business Committee.
- (3) At 4.00 pm, or at such earlier time as the state of business permits, the Chairperson shall interrupt the business under consideration and the Forum shall forthwith stand adjourned; provided that, at 4.00 pm, a motion may be made after notice (which motion is to be decided upon without amendment or debate) that the sitting of the Forum be extended by a specified period of up to but not exceeding two hours.
- (4) Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, save only that no notification to the contrary from the Secretary of State (as specified in Paragraph (2) is in force, the Chairperson may, having regard to the views of the

Business Committee, postpone a meeting of the Forum, or call a meeting before the date and time to which it had been adjourned.

- (5) Under this Rule, the Chairperson may at any time suspend a sitting of the Forum for a period of up to fifteen minutes, which period may not be exceeded unless by leave of the Forum.
- (6) The Forum shall normally meet in Belfast, but by leave of the Forum may from time to time meet elsewhere in Northern Ireland.
- (7) The Union Flag shall be flown when the Forum is meeting.

7. BUSINESS COMMITTEE

- (1) There shall be a committee of the Forum known as the Business Committee which shall arrange the business of the Forum and perform such other duties as the Chairperson may request or the Forum determine.
- (2) The Business Committee shall consist of not less than ten and not more than sixteen members appointed by motion made after notice, and shall be such that, so far as is practicable, there is a fair reflection of the parties participating in the Forum providing that each party is entitled to at least one place.
- (3) The Chairperson of the Forum shall be Chairperson of the Business Committee.
- (4) The Chairperson of the Forum shall nominate two members, either of whom, in his/her unavoidable absence, shall act as Chairperson of the Business Committee.
- (5) The quorum of the Business Committee shall be five.

Fax from :

- (6) The procedures of the Business Committee shall be such as the Committee shall determine.
- (7) The Business Committee shall advise the Chairperson of the Forum on the appointment of members to, and the discharge of members from, committees appointed under Rule 14.

10. SPEECHES IN THE FORUM

8. BUSINESS OF THE FORUM

- (1) The business of the Forum shall be such as to promote dialogue and understanding within Northern Ireland.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of Paragraph (1), the business of the Forum each day shall be such as the Chairperson, having regard to the views of the Business Committee, may direct.
- (3) The Chairperson shall prepare an agenda for each sitting day showing the business to be taken, together with such other information as he/she may direct.
- (4) Notice of future business shall be given in writing to the Chairperson, who shall prepare from time to time a Business Paper listing the notices received.
- (5) Except by leave or order of the Forum, no motion may be proposed unless notice of it has appeared in a Business Paper circulated at least one day before that on which the motion is to be taken.

9. AMENDMENTS

- (1) When an amendment has been moved to any question, the question to be proposed shall be that the amendment be made.

- (2) In respect of any motion, the Chairperson shall have power to select the amendments to be proposed; and may, if he/she thinks fit, call upon any member who has given notice of an amendment to give such explanation of its object as may enable him/her to form a judgement upon it.

10. SPEECHES IN THE FORUM

- (1) No motion or amendment (other than a motion for the election of the Chairperson) shall require to be seconded.
- (2) A member shall not address the Forum unless called on to speak by the Chairperson; and when the Chairperson rises to speak, the member addressing the Forum shall cease speaking and resume his/her place.
- (3) (a) A member may not speak more than once to the same question, but a right of reply shall be allowed to a member who has moved a substantive motion.
- (b) Notwithstanding sub-paragraph 10(3)(a) above, any Member may seek to intervene while another Member is speaking, subject to that Member's consent, but may not persist in so doing if the person speaking refuses to give way.
- (4) Unless by the leave of the Forum, a member may not speak in debate on any question for longer than the periods specified below:
- member moving a substantive motion - up to 20 minutes
- member moving a substantive motion (in reply) - up to 15 minutes

each other member (including a member moving an amendment) - up to 10 minutes.

- (5) The Business Committee may provide time for special debates during which no member may speak for more than 5 minutes unless by leave of the Forum.

- (6) The Chairperson, after having called the attention of the Forum to the conduct of a member who persists in irrelevance or tedious repetition either of his/her own arguments or of the arguments used by other members in debate, may direct him/her to discontinue his/her speech.

11. ORDER IN THE FORUM

- (1) If any member of the Forum -

- (a) persistently and intentionally obstructs the business of the Forum; or
- (b) is guilty of disorderly conduct; or
- (c) uses objectionable words eg, as defined in Erskine May which he/she refuses to withdraw; or
- (d) intentionally refuses to conform to any Rule; or
- (e) intentionally disregards the authority of the Chairperson

the Chairperson, having (if appropriate) called on the member to withdraw his/her remarks and having called the attention of the Forum to the conduct of the said member, may direct the member to discontinue his/her speech, or to withdraw immediately from the debating chamber and its precincts. Any member so ordered to withdraw shall do so

forthwith, and shall absent himself/herself from the chamber and precincts during the remainder of that day's sitting.

- (2) In the case of general disorder arising in the Forum, the Chairperson may, if he/she thinks it necessary, adjourn the proceedings, or suspend the sitting for a period to be named by him/her.

12. CLOSURE OF DEBATE

- (1) After a question has been proposed, any member who has not already spoken to it, or to any amendment which has been moved, may move that the question be now put; and unless it shall appear to the Chairperson that such motion is an abuse of the Rules of the Forum, or an infringement of the rights of any member, the question that the question be now put shall be put forthwith, and decided without amendment or debate.
- (2) When such a motion has been carried, any further motion may be made (subject to the assent of the Chairperson) to bring to a decision any question which has already been proposed. Such further motion shall be put forthwith, and decided without amendment or debate.

13. VOTING

- (1) For an affirmative decision on a matter other than a business motion, it shall be necessary for assent to be indicated by not less than 66% of those voting; provided also that such an affirmative decision may reasonably be deemed to command support across the various traditions in Northern Ireland.
- (2) If, in the course of a sitting, the opinion of the Chairperson as to the decision of a question is

challenged, the Chairperson shall cause a general announcement to be made, and after an interval of three minutes shall ask each member by name, in alphabetical order, to declare Aye, No or Abstain in respect of the question put. Voting "abstain" shall not for the determination of the result be taken into account. The Chairperson shall then announce the number of votes cast, and the determination of the Forum as provided for in paragraph (1).

14. COMMITTEES OF THE FORUM

- (1) Committees to assist the Forum in the discharge of its functions shall be appointed by motion made after notice, setting out terms of reference, quorum and composition.
- (2) Committees shall consist of not less than 10 and not more than 19 members appointed by Motion made after notice and shall be such that, as far as is practicable, it is a fair reflection of the parties participating in the Forum, providing that each party is entitled to at least one seat.
- (3) A committee appointed under Paragraph (1) may sit at any time and may adjourn from place to place.
- (4) (a) Any Committee of the Forum shall have the power to invite such persons as may be nominated or selected to attend on behalf of any political party represented in the Forum to its meetings and to take part as a participant in the deliberation of the Committee subject to the discretion of the Chairperson. Such a person, if unelected, will not have the right to vote on behalf of their respective political party.

- (b) Such a committee may invite any person/s to address it concerning any topic relevant to the committee's terms of reference.
- (5) Members of the press and public may be admitted at the discretion of the committee.
- (6) Subject to the foregoing provisions, the procedures of a committee appointed under Paragraph (1) shall be such as the committee itself determines, or as the Forum shall otherwise order.
- (7) Nothing in the above is to be taken as precluding the Business Committee, as it feels appropriate, from making arrangements for the Forum itself to invite bodies and individuals to submit views on specified matters of interest, and for reports to be prepared and (subject to Rule 13) adopted on such matters.

15. MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

- (1) The proceedings of the Forum shall be noted, and, after perusal and signature by the Chairperson, shall be circulated to all members.
- (2) The minutes of proceedings for each day's sitting shall include a record of the names of those members who attended.

16. VISITORS

- (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in Rule 14, unless otherwise ordered, visitors shall be admitted under supervision only to such places in the Forum and its precincts as may be specified by the Chairperson.

- (2) For the purposes of this Rule, the term "visitors" includes all persons other than members and officers of the Forum and members of the news media. This will not include any Chairperson who is not an elected Member of the Forum.
- (3) The Chairperson may, if he/she thinks fit, order the withdrawal of visitors from sittings of the Forum and its committees.
- (4) Visitors shall not be permitted to take into the Forum any mobile telephone , camera, tape recorder, briefcase or large bag.

17. NEWS MEDIA

- (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in Rule 14, unless otherwise ordered, members of the news media shall be admitted under supervision only to such places in the Forum and its precincts as may be specified by the Chairperson.
- (2) The Chairperson may, if he/she thinks fit, order the withdrawal of the news media from sittings of the Forum and its committees.
- (3) Members of the news media shall not be permitted to take into the Forum any mobile telephone, tape recorder, briefcase or large bag.
- (4) Unless the prior permission of the Chairperson has been sought and granted, members of the news media shall not be permitted to take into the Forum any camera.
- (5) Unless the prior permission of the Chairperson has been sought and granted, members of the news media shall not

be permitted to photograph, interview or record in areas not designated for the purpose.

18. SUSPENSION OF RULES

A Rule of the Forum may be suspended by leave, or on motion made without notice, provided that it does not appear to the Chairperson that such suspension as is requested would be an infringement of the rights of any member/s, and it is approved on a vote by seventy-five per cent of those voting.

MR Ray

MR Louch

MR Watkins

MR Stephens

MR Hill

MR Perry

MR Macdonald

MR Gordon

MR Evans

MR Campbell

MR Harrison

MR Whysall