

NEG 44A/96

Suggested alternative draft paragraph 4 of 'Points of Agreement' on confidentiality proposed by British Government.

1. Documents produced by participants in the course of the negotiations will be subject to the rule of confidentiality except that it will be permissible for any participant to make use in public of any statement of its policy, or to respond in public to any enquiry relating to its position, on any matter relating to the negotiations. Provided that in doing so the policy or position of any other participant would not be made public.

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The Secretary of State opened the discussion by suggesting that last Wednesday's session had been helpful in exploring the concerns of both Governments and the UUP in a manner which would permit more frankness than was possible in the past. There had since been two trilateral talks with the UUP at official level, which he hoped, had also been helpful.

It was common ground that we were all seeking a means of leaving the opening Plenary and getting into the three-stranded discussions. Fear and suspicion existed about the whole process. The UUP needed reassurance that the Governments were for real in bringing forward a decommissioning scheme which would meet their anxieties and reasonable requirements. The Governments, in turn, were anxious to establish that the UUP were committed to getting into the three-stranded talks in the shortest practicable period.

The UUP had indicated earlier this month that they needed to see the draft legislation. This had now been done. They still had a concern that the decommissioning schemes, yet to be formulated, would not be sufficient. The Governments needed to discuss now what the UUP considered had still to be done to enable them to agree to an "end strategy" and to play their part in it. We recognised that the UUP were under attack from the DUP and needed to have plenty to show in order to forestall these attacks between now and the enactment of the legislation. Equally, the two Governments needed reassurance that there was a desire on the UUP's part to get into three-stranded talks.

The Minister for Justice endorsed these remarks.

Noting the emphasis on a quid pro quo, Ministers said that the UUP did not wish to get into a situation in which they were trading political progress for guns (as at