

**CONFIDENTIAL**

RECEIVED BY  
- 6 SEP 1996

c Press

**FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 1996**

cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B)  
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B)  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B)  
PS/PUS (L&B)  
Mr Legge  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Bell  
Mr Leach  
Mr Steele  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Wood (L&B)  
Mr Hill  
Mr Lavery  
Mr Maccabe  
Mr Perry  
Ms Bharucha  
Ms Mapstone  
HMA Dublin  
Mr Clarke, HME Dublin  
Mr Lamont, RID  
Mr Campbell Bannerman  
Mr Holmes, No 10

[illegible]

Mr Stephens -B

**ADARE MEETING: DUBLIN, THURSDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 10.30 AM - 12.30 PM**

The Secretary of State was grateful for the briefing you provided for the Adare meeting held this morning in Dublin. Present on the Irish side were the Tanaiste, Messrs McKernan, O hUiginn, Donaghue, Finlay, Cooney, Hickey, Montgomery and O'Flynn. On the British side were the Secretary of State, Michael Ancram, PUS, Sir David Fell, HMA Dublin, Messrs Thomas, Bell, Leach, Hill, you and me.

## Summary

2. It was a useful, if inconclusive event, mainly because much hung on a planned meeting between the SDLP and UUP was not taking place until later in the day, and also because the UUP still had to produce a paper outlining their position on decommissioning. However, the Irish side confirmed they were absolutely committed to the Talks process and wished to see it moving forward apace. Positions were explored in relation to the resumption of the Talks

**CONFIDENTIAL**

- 1 -

SOFS/81861



CONFIDENTIAL

on Monday, with the Irish showing scepticism of any delay in holding a plenary (as suggested by the UUP to forestall a DUP/UKUP grandstand on the presence of the Loyalists). In an inconclusive discussion on the nature of the 'address' to decommissioning the Irish reiterated their bottom line but came some way towards the UUP position by suggesting that four sub-committees be established - one for each strand and the other to consider decommissioning. Further work is to be done with the UUP and SDLP over the weekend at the BIA.

Detail

3. There was general agreement that a great deal of damage had been done by Drumcree, with increased tension and suspicion on all sides. Both Governments agreed that a common, concerted approach was needed and the resumption of Talks on 9 September provided a significant window. It was important that progress should be made on the first day if possible. Michael Ancram's meetings with the UUP and SDLP yesterday had shown both parties professing their intention to make progress in the Talks. The UUP were concerned that the DUP, assisted by the UKUP, would raise the presence of the PUP and UDP as incompatible with the Mitchell principles, on account of the recent CLMC statement. They suggested deferring the plenary until the following day while Rule 29 was played in. They were also concerned that opening statements would signal the beginning of substantive negotiations. Interestingly, Seamus Mallon had said that opening statements might be dispensed with.

4. The Irish side reported that their meeting with the SDLP had shown a similar intention to make progress, but had also underlined the pressure that the party was feeling, particularly with Sinn Fein, who were not only outside the process (and therefore unblemished by it) but had made gains in the Summer. In relation to opening statements, the Irish noted that they were on the proposed agenda and might well prove helpful. However, they were not particularly concerned at how they were described or how long or short they would be. The main question was the handling of

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

SOFs/81861



CONFIDENTIAL

decommissioning - this was absolutely crucial; if handled properly, then progress would be made, otherwise open confrontation could ensue, with the SDLP claiming an "abdication of politics" and leaving the initiative to the quartermasters. Unionists were not on the moral high ground since Drumcree and it was felt that they should either sign-up after a short debate to the establishment of a sub-committee alongside the three strands or flounder around, with SDLP hostility ensuing, because they (the SDLP) did not think the subject belonged in the Talks process at all. Much would depend on what the UUP were going to say in their paper on decommissioning next week. The Irish warned that there was a thin line to walk on this subject, and that it was quite possible to lose the people the Governments needed to get involved in order to make it into an inclusive process.

5. In further discussion about the handling of the resumption of Talks, it was agreed that it would be important to show some early progress. This might be difficult if bilaterals began early and went on throughout the day. It would be important to reach agreement on the agenda. The British side suggested that the two sides could suggest remitting the agenda to the Business Committee and then move to introductory remarks. It would very much depend on whether the SDLP and UUP could reach agreement on the agenda; if not, then the start may have to be postponed for a few hours at least to try to get agreement on it.

6. Again the Irish side suggested that the one subject which would make or break the process was decommissioning. The UUP had made a point about a promise from the Taoiseach that they would be shown the Irish legislation on decommissioning; the Irish side said that they could certainly do that but there was a procedure for showing draft legislation to other parties and it would probably be better to be done in a sub-committee setting. In addition, legislation was only one of 10 or 20 other technical details which would need to be discussed. The Irish side said that they had given a cast-iron guarantee that legislation would not be a block to



CONFIDENTIAL

decommissioning. A lot of work had been done and could be discussed in sub-committee, though debating legislation when the main elements were not present in the process was, to some extent, unreal. The British side suggested that the Irish side needed to talk directly with the Unionists on this subject.

7. The British side reported that the UUP had suggested two sub-committees of plenary - one to deal with the agenda for the Talks and the other with decommissioning. These would operate on the same time frame following a time-limited debate on decommissioning in plenary. The Irish side saw that proposal as being open-ended and imbalanced because one sub-committee was dealing with a substantive issue (decommissioning) while the other should be able to complete its work very quickly. The SDLP were lending themselves to the "enormous fiction of decommissioning"; it was an important issue and had to be dealt with soberly, but the aim was to get an inclusive process - if the Unionists did not want such a process, why were they bothering with decommissioning. In any event, by adopting such a proposal the two Governments would be accepting a "Unionist" proposal which would be politically difficult for the SDLP.

8. Nevertheless and somewhat surprisingly Sean O hUiginn then suggested a refinement of this approach in which there might be four sub-committees set up to report back on an agenda for each strand and decommissioning. It was not clear whether this would involve a prior debate on decommissioning in plenary. The terms of reference for the sub-committees could be framed so that they came up with work plans in a short time-frame. [Comment: the proposal was clearly intended to get the three strands started, at least in embryo form, alongside the address to decommissioning. As such it had echoes of the notion that decommissioning should be dealt with in a "fourth strand", which Unionists have objected to in the past. However it was clearly intended to be constructive and has some attractions. As Sean O hUiginn pointed out, it would certainly resolve the awkwardness which would otherwise arise over dealing

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -



6. Sep. 1996 14:50

S OF S PRIVATE OFFICE 1712106722

No. 0238 P. 6/6

CONFIDENTIAL

with the "Strand 1" agenda in a format which involved the Irish Government.] After further discussion, it was agreed that the debate was somewhat academic until the outcome of the meeting between the SDLP and UUP was known.

9. In conclusion, and looking to Monday, it was agreed that the Talks must start in plenary formation. If an impasse was reached then there might need to be a period of bilaterals, returning to plenary later in the afternoon. It was vital that there should be a positive outcome on Monday and this very much depended on the degree of co-operation which could be engendered between the UUP and SDLP. [Note It was later agreed that Michael Ancram would seek an update from Seamus Mallon on the SDLP/UUP meeting; the Secretary of State would seek an update on the meeting from David Trimble; and attempts would be made at the BIA to broker an agreed way forward for Monday between the representatives of the parties attending.]

(SIGNED)

W K LINDSAY  
PS/SECRETARY OF STATE

CONFIDENTIAL

SOFs/31861