

19 SEP 1997

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FROM: PETER MAY
24 September 1997

cc: as attached

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TALKS SUMMARY: 24 SEPTEMBER 1997

A long but ultimately fruitful day in which the procedural motion was passed by the Plenary formally ending the Opening Plenary and launching substantive negotiations. The two Governments also signed an agreement on the establishment of the decommissioning commission, and issued their determination on the UUP indictment of Sinn Fein.

Lengthy exchanges involving particularly HMG, the Irish Government and three Unionist parties and latterly the SDLP finally bore fruit as agreement was reached.

Much detailed textual discussion over the exact terms of the procedural motion all centred around a single sub-paragraph requested by the UUP referring back to the two Governments' statement of 15 September specifically on decommissioning. Whether to refer to the progress made in Talks in the context of decommissioning was a key issue. The Loyalist parties also sought the inclusion of a reference to the importance of consent but the Irish Government and the SDLP would only mention consent in the fullest terms representing its importance to both communities. Ultimately a UUP/SDLP bilateral agreed a text based on an SDLP suggestion.

Sinn Fein were largely relaxed throughout knowing they would not be supporting that section no matter what language was agreed. The

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Other parties (including Alliance) spent much of the day feeling isolated and ever more aggrieved by the delay and repeated adjournments.

The determination by the two Governments on the UUP indictment against Sinn Fein was also promulgated. Its outcome caused little surprise among the participants.

The final voting in the Plenary on the procedural motion was unanimous apart from Sinn Fein opposition to paragraph 2(b). The procedural motion was passed with sufficient consensus.

(Signed)

PETER MAY

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