

FROM: ALAN SMYTH
TALKS PLANNING UNIT
13 JANUARY 1998

UNDE
SEC 3811

14 JAN 1998

CENT SEC

cc PS/Mr Murphy (DFP,B&L)
PS/Mr Ingram (DED,B&L)
PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Mr Semple
Mr Thomas
Mr Steele
Mr Leach
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Stephens
Mr Woods (B&L)
Mr Beeton
Mr Brooker
Mr Hill
Mr Ferguson
Mr Maccabe
Mr Sanderson, Cab Off (via CPL)
Mr Fergusson, RID FCO
HMA Dublin
Mr N Warner
Mr Holmes, No 10

RECEIVED 15 JAN 1998
NC/19/1

1. to Mr Smyth
in large
to Brown
14.1
15/1

PS/Secretary of State (L&B)

TALKS SUMMARY: TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 1998

Overall Summary

A morning of bilaterals and a 2 hour Plenary in the afternoon ended with the parties agreeing to proceed with negotiations in Strand One and Strand Two sub-groups next week. It was also agreed that discussion on cross-strand issues should be dealt with in a Working Sub-Group of the Plenary to be called at the discretion of the Chairman, after appropriate consultation with all parties.

Detail

The day began on a very positive note, due in no small part to the manner in which the entire ranks of the media had sought to interpret and report on the Governments' Propositions on Heads of Agreement and the parties' responses. It was agreed that Mr Murphy would seek the views of the parties through bilaterals and that officials would agree with the Irish a response to Sinn Fein's letter received the previous evening and confirm that both Governments intended to adopt similar positions for the Plenary.

During the morning officials confirmed that both Governments would indeed be taking similar lines at the Plenary. **Mr Murphy** had tested the water with the UUP, the SDLP, Alliance and the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. He reported that the general conclusion was that parties would not wish to vote on the Propositions Text and that most favoured a brief discussion. However, this was set in context when **Mr Hill** reported that the Irish had had a very difficult meeting with Sinn Fein who were saying that the Propositions on Heads of Agreement were far removed from the Framework Document and that they lacked proper discussion of North/South Institutions and associated executive powers.

Liaison sub-committee on Confidence Building Measures

The Liaison sub-committee on CBMs spent their entire session discussing prisons. It was agreed that they would address economic and social issues, including rights, at the next meeting on 4 February.

Plenary

The afternoon commenced with a meeting of the Plenary at 2.00pm. There was a genuine feeling of achievement given the events of the previous day but also a collective sense that this was where the real work would begin.

The Chairman, **Senator Mitchell**, asked all participants to make their observations on the Propositions on Heads of Agreement and indicated that a decision on how to proceed thereafter would be discussed at the conclusion of the party presentations.

After summarising the parties proposals the Chairman asked for comments on whether further discussion should now be referred to discussions within the strands (at the suggestion of Alliance, Labour, the PUP, the UDP and the UUP) or the Working Sub-Group of the Plenary (suggested by the NIWC). **John Hume** (SDLP) suggested that it would only be proper to allow for both arrangements as he considered that subjects which crossed over the three Strands would inevitably come up. All other parties, with the exception of the UUP, accepted his analysis. After further debate it was agreed that the matter of whether the Working Sub-Group of the Plenary would be reconvened would be a matter of judgement for the Chairman and that he would take a decision as and when he thought it appropriate, following consultation with the parties.

It was proposed and agreed that strand 1 and 2 sub-groups in 2 + 2 format would be convened. The Strand 1 sub-group would meet at 11.00am on Monday 19 January with strand 2 convening at 11.00am the following day.

The meeting was protracted slightly by a contribution from **Martin McGuinness** (Sinn Fein) in which he stated that it would be of immeasurable help if the UUP would recognise the inclusiveness of the process and engage with his party in bilaterals. An absence of totally inclusive negotiations was, he believed, creating a climate where sectarian murder was inevitable. If such contact did not happen soon the process would be seen as seriously flawed. In response to Mr McGuinness **Mr Ervine** (PUP) engaged him in a face to face confrontation. He refuted totally the allegation that anybody in the

CONFIDENTIAL

room had been responsible for one single death over the past weeks and said that Mr McGuinness' observations were quite frankly an insult and he resented the use of threatening language. **Mr McGuinness** countered Mr Ervine's claims and said that nothing he had said could be interpreted as a threat in any way. He again urged the UUP to face reality and engage with them in negotiations.

In the absence of any other further comment from the parties **Senator Mitchell** brought discussion to a close by reiterating the arrangements for next week.

ALAN SMYTH
TALKS PLANNING UNIT

CONFIDENTIAL

JC/TALKS

PRONI CENT/1/27/3A