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Multi-Party Talks**Daily Report - 14 October 1996**

1. **In summary**, a marathon session of the talks ended in the early hours of this morning with the adoption by the Plenary of the attached agenda for the remainder of the opening Plenary. This had effectively been agreed in earlier bilateral contacts between the SDLP and the UUP. The DUP and the UKUP mounted a sustained filibuster during a seven-hour Plenary session last night to register their disapproval both of the agenda and of the consultation process from which it had emerged. The agenda was ultimately voted through by sufficient consensus and the opening Plenary will resume at 12 noon today with the first item on it (circulation and introduction of proposals regarding the comprehensive agenda).
2. The Government delegation yesterday was led by the Minister for Justice.
3. The agreement on the agenda came about as follows. Last Wednesday, SDLP and UUP negotiators agreed a draft agenda ad referendum. This draft was accepted by party leaders on both sides after a series of bilateral contacts yesterday. The SDLP firmly resisted DUP pressure, mediated through the UUP, to dilute the reference to the International Body's report in item 2. One slight amendment was made in item 3 (the addition of the words "discussion and") in deference to UUP concerns. The text was agreed with other delegations in further contacts.
4. The UUP, while agreeable to the text, had initially appeared to be playing for extra time. They joined with the other two Unionist parties in mid-afternoon to request an adjournment of the Plenary till this morning, as agreement seemed unlikely to be reached yesterday. However, in the late afternoon the UUP agreed to cooperate with an effort to secure agreement on the agenda at a resumed Plenary last night.
5. The Plenary, which had been adjourned after a brief morning session to facilitate further bilaterals on the agenda, was reconvened by the Chairman (Holkeri) at 6pm. He circulated in his own name the agreed proposal which had emerged from the bilateral contacts.
6. The DUP and the UKUP immediately objected to this procedure and sought in various ways to highlight the UUP's involvement in this exercise. They proceeded to stage a protracted filibuster over several hours with a view to maximising pressure on the UUP and frustrating what they portrayed as a concerted effort by the two Governments, the UUP and the SDLP to impose an agenda in which decommissioning had been downgraded from earlier drafts.

SF1017/2

7. This proved to be an exceptionally acrimonious debate, with many echoes of the DUP/UKUP attempt last June to block the installation of Senator Mitchell as Chairman. Paisley and McCartney directed their fire initially at the Chairman for providing cover for the parties involved in the bilateral contacts. McCartney warned that his disapproval of this move, which called into question the impartiality of the Chairman, would have a bearing on the UKUP's future involvement in these talks. A related theme was personalised abuse aimed at the Chairman's staff.
8. The DUP and the UKUP also tried to represent the bilateral exchanges as a process of which they had been entirely ignorant. This was contradicted by Trimble, who then departed for Westminster (leaving the lead UUP role to Taylor).
9. The DUP and the UKUP also directed a stream of invective at the UUP over the latter's withdrawal from the mid-afternoon request by the three Unionist parties for an adjournment of the Plenary to today. Donaldson explained that his party leader had changed his mind on this point in the light of developing circumstances.
10. Following a brief adjournment requested by the DUP and the UKUP, the agenda was recirculated as a joint proposal from the UUP and the SDLP. Aided by a vote (on a proposal from Taylor) in favour of pressing the matter to a conclusion last night, the Chairman invited comments on the substance of the proposal.
11. Robinson identified four points on which he wished to have clarification from the proposers and pursued these at various stages during the evening. In particular, he complained that the possibility of considering decommissioning proposals other than those of the International Body seemed to be excluded. When various indications of flexibility on this point were given around the table, he and McCartney demanded that the specific reference to the International Body's report be deleted. Robinson and McCartney also sought explicit provision for the reaching of the "agreements" indicated in the proposal under discussion.
12. In the light of consultations with the other parties during an adjournment, Taylor had the text circulated in a third version, this time bearing the names of seven parties as proposers. The DUP and the UKUP denounced what they represented as a further attempt to obscure UUP involvement and insisted that the only proposal they were addressing was the joint UUP/SDLP one.
13. The British Government, represented at official level, made clear their support for the proposal, though they were ready to consider Robinson's four points. The Minister for Justice also expressed support for the proposal and rebutted a DUP allegation about "collusion" between the two Governments in this regard.
14. After a further adjournment, the UKUP circulated a series of amendments. McCartney and Wilson spoke at length to these and were supported by Paisley, Robinson and McCrea. Robinson also made two oral proposals for amendments, including a suggestion for time-limits (twenty minutes per speaker) in the debate envisaged under item 1.

SF1017/3

15. In an effective intervention, Mallon demonstrated that the points to which the DUP and the UKUP were objecting had been already accepted by them in earlier drafts of the agenda. The UUP remained largely silent during these exchanges.
16. Various efforts were made by the SDLP during the evening to bring the matter to a vote. Finally, around 12.30am, the Chairman succeeded in putting the proposed amendments and the main proposal to a vote. This brought the predictable outcome, the amendments attracting only DUP and UKUP support (though the Loyalist parties backed one of the DUP suggestions). The agenda was duly declared to have been adopted by sufficient consensus.
17. There was a further bad-tempered exchange over confidentiality before the session came to a close around 1.30am. An attempt by Hume to have the Chairman issue a laconic factual statement on the proceedings (in order to preempt competitive briefings) failed due to lack of support.
18. It was agreed that the Plenary would resume at 12 noon today to handle item 1 (circulation and introduction of proposals regarding the comprehensive agenda). Delegations would submit by 11am their proposals in this regard (whether new or existing) and these would be circulated by the Chairman. It was also agreed that the DUP would circulate a written proposal on the timetabling aspect.



David Donoghue
15 October 1996

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IN CONFIDENCE

NEG 58/96

(Agreed by sufficient consensus,
c 01.00 15 October)**DRAFT AGENDA FOR REMAINDER OF THE OPENING PLENARY**

proposed by Alliance Party, Labour Party, Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, Progressive Unionist Party, Social Democratic and Labour Party, Ulster Democratic Party, Ulster Unionist Party.

1. Circulation and Introduction of Proposals regarding the Comprehensive Agenda.
2. Consideration of the International Body's proposals on decommissioning:
 - (a) discussion of proposals;
 - (b) participants' commitment to work constructively to implement agreements on decommissioning;
 - (c) consideration of, and agreement on, mechanisms necessary to enable further progress to be made on decommissioning alongside negotiations in three strands.
3. Discussion and Adoption of Comprehensive Agenda.
4. Launch of three-stranded negotiations and establishment of agreed mechanisms on decommissioning.
5. Concluding remarks by Independent Chairman.

14 October 1996

IN CONFIDENCE