



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/99/26

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Accession Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Caps

(2)

(25) ~~*[scribble]*~~

Office of the Independent Chairmen

Castle Buildings Stormont Belfast BT4 3SG Northern Ireland

Telephone 01232 522957 Facsimile 01232 768905

cc *See Gallagher*
Joint Secretary
D. Cooney
P O'Connor
R. Montgomery
H. Q. / circulation

Please find enclosed:

HW 8/12

Strand One: Chairman's Report to Review Plenary,
2 December 1997

Strand Two: Chairmen's Report to Review Plenary,
2 December 1997: Liaison Sub-committee on
Decommissioning; Liaison Sub-committee on
Confidence Building Measures

Strand Three: British and Irish Governments' Report to
Review Plenary, 2 December 1997.

Mr McLaughlin
Not passed on to
the Tatisearch - this
is just for the
record.

3 December 1997

Enc

[Signature]

10.12.97

STRAND ONE: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE REVIEW PLENARY

This statement reports on the discussions we have had in Strand One of the talks since the start of substantive negotiations on 7 October.

The Strand One participants have taken part in a series of round-table meetings covering the whole agenda. With relatively few exceptions, parties submitted papers covering all items of the agenda, and where they did not they generally gave an account of their views in the meetings. In the last two weeks, we have had two rounds of intensive, and very productive, bilaterals. In the light of the first, I was able to circulate a paper setting out questions to give greater focus to the second round.

Overall, most delegations saw merit in aspects of the proposals formulated in 1992, as developed in the British Government's paper of 1995, *A Framework for Accountable Government*. Most, however, also had ideas about how that scheme could be improved.

There was a very large measure of agreement in favour of an elected institution in Northern Ireland, as part of a comprehensive settlement, the method of election to involve proportional representation in some form. There was wide agreement also that such new arrangements should involve the discharge of executive powers, with arrangements to ensure distribution of responsibilities to representatives of both main sections of the community. The extent of support for such arrangements to encompass legislative functions was less well defined, as was the range of functions to be covered, though many delegations believed it should be extensive.

There was a recognition of the need for checks and balances to ensure the protection of the interests of all sections of the community, though some differences about the form they should take. Some delegations saw merit in adopting elements of the sufficient consensus rule, as used in these talks, in this context. We heard a number of criticisms of the idea of a Panel, as proposed in 1992, though no clear view so far about how its place might be filled. More

attention will clearly need to be given to the rights and justice aspects of the agenda.

To sum up, there are a substantial number of new ideas in circulation in Strand One. I believe that is in principle healthy. Many of these ideas have not yet been subject to multilateral discussion, and it is difficult to know what agreement they would command. But in my view there are grounds for confidence, which I believe is shared by most participants, that in the context of a broader agreed settlement we would be able to reach agreement about Strand One issues.

Paul Murphy

2 December 1997

Office of the Independent Chairmen

Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SG

Tel. (01232) 522957, Fax (01232) 768905

CHAIRMEN'S REPORT TO THE PLENARY, DECEMBER 2, 1997: STRAND TWO; LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE ON DECOMMISSIONING; LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

STRAND TWO

Strand Two met in full session six times over the period 7 October to 10 November. As agreed by participants, sessions were devoted to an overview of the comprehensive agenda, without seeking agreement on any agenda item. After the inaugural session at which opening statements were made, principles and requirements, constitutional issues, new arrangements, the relationships with other arrangements, and rights and safeguards were addressed sequentially. Those participants who chose to do so submitted papers detailing their views in advance of each session; each participant had an opportunity to expound and elaborate on its own views, as well as to pose questions and seek clarification of the views of other participants.

A period of intensive consultations took place the week of 17 November. The Chairmen met with each party on a bilateral basis to review discussions to date, to attempt to identify areas of commonality, and to explore ideas on the way forward. Participants also conducted bilaterals and meetings in other formats among themselves.

LIAISON SUBCOMMITTEE ON DECOMMISSIONING

The Liaison Subcommittee on Decommissioning held its inaugural meeting on 8 October. The Subcommittee met twice subsequently. On 17 November the two governments briefed the Subcommittee on the legislation passed in both jurisdictions in 1997. On 25 November the Subcommittee held a meeting to discuss and consider the Initial Report of the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD). Subcommittee participants had an opportunity to question the Commissioners about their report and to offer their reactions to the work of the IICD to date. No general conclusions about the Initial Report were agreed. The Subcommittee will next meet at the call of the Chair once the IICD has completed the next phase of its task, the detailed proposals for decommissioning schemes.

LIAISON SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

The Liaison Subcommittee on Confidence Building Measures held its inaugural meeting on 8 October. At its second meeting on 10 November, participants in the Subcommittee made general statements on confidence building measures, many based on papers submitted on an optional basis and agreed to address, in biweekly meetings on an issue-per-session basis, five broad subjects: prisoners; economic and social development; paramilitary activity; security issues; and policing issues. The 1 December discussion of prisoners elicited a variety of views.

TO: ALL PARTICIPANTS

FROM: THE BRITISH & IRISH GOVERNMENTS

2 DECEMBER 1997

STRAND THREE REPORT TO THE REVIEW PLENARY

The British and Irish Governments have discussed Strand Three issues and there has been one meeting of the Strand Three Liaison Group. On 14 October the two Governments invited the views of the parties on a consultation paper "Strand Three A New Agreement". Most parties responded to this invitation and the Governments are now reflecting on the views of the parties as they consider how the totality of relationships between the two islands can be accommodated within the negotiations. In addition a number of the parties have also discussed Strand Three issues in bilateral meetings with the two Governments.