

IRISH TIMES

DUBLIN, FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1991

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s put date on Dublin talks

Unionist statement: page 2.

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The proposal has not been formally put to the other parties. One non-unionist politician last night said "there is nothing on the table." Asked if that meant he knew nothing of such a proposal, he replied: "Nothing of that kind has been mooted in an official way."

A unionist source confirmed this, and said discussion about the possibilities of opening strand two on July 8th had so far been confined to "voices in the corridors." However, it is claimed the voices have reached the British Government, and that unionist politicians have had private discussions about the proposal with Northern Ireland Office officials.

The Irish Times has also learned that there was specific focus on the

possibilities of North-South talks on July 8th in the course of this week's inter-party talks at Stormont. It is understood that on Tuesday, the Alliance Party published an alternative to the unionist timetable, which specifically made provision for strand two talks opening in London on July 6th, and continuing the following day in Belfast.

Unionist sources last night said their plan for an early meeting with the Irish Government was not conditional on the postponement of the scheduled meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference, but was predicted on the assumption that the meeting would proceed.

The sources also confirmed that the talks would end as soon as the British Government confirmed that Maryfield officials have resumed their normal duties preparatory to the conference meeting. As part of the understanding reached during the "talks about talks" stage of the process, the Minister of

State, Dr Brian Mawhinney, has reportedly undertaken to advise the parties when that development occurs.

Some unionists last night expressed the belief that the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mr Peter Brooke, would move next week to adjourn the proceedings, and insisted the process could still be shelved without an agreed basis for its resumption.

Against that, other sources say the Northern Ireland Office is directly involved in plans for a serious intensification of the strand one talks, which resume on Monday, and will continue for four days next week.

Although there are no formal talks today, it is understood there will be contact between the British Government and the various parties, some of whom were working at Stormont last night.

Many questions remain unresolved. It is hard to envisage how the parties could in one week plough their way through four sets of proposals for the future internal government of North-

ern Ireland, much less reach agreement sufficient to allow North-South talks get under way.

However, some sources hinted that "a mechanism" has been devised to render this possible. The impression is growing that unionists would seek some form of "interim agreement" next week, leaving detailed consideration of the "nuts and bolts" until later.

Obviously, unionists are still hoping that the July 16th conference meeting might be shelved, to permit the talks to continue through the month. To date, there has been no indication that either government would be willing to do so. Either way, their attitude to the latest unionist manoeuvres must soon be disclosed.

Meanwhile, there are reports that two senior officials — from the Northern Ireland Office and the Department of Foreign Affairs — are currently in Australia, briefing Sir Ninian Stephen, who is to be the chairman for strand two of the talks.



THE IRISH TIMES

DUBLIN, FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1991

Unionists put date on Dublin

From Frank Millar,
London Editor

SENIOR UNIONIST sources have confirmed to *The Irish Times* their willingness to commence North-South negotiations — the second strand of the talks about a possible new British-Irish agreement — in the week beginning July 8th.

It is acknowledged that some leading members of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) will have extreme difficulty with this proposal. However, unionist sources argue that it is implicit in the joint unionist plan for an acceleration of the talks timetable, presented to the other parties at Stormont last Monday, and published in today's paper.

The joint DUP and Ulster Unionist Party plan for 127.5 hours of talks before July 15th was designed to meet the "deadline" represented by the

scheduled meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference the following day.

Paragraph four of the unionist position paper speaks of their desire to make progress in strand one "and thereby, if possible, to move to strand two." However, unionist sources insist this does not represent "a get out clause".

One politician last night said the unionist plan was to complete by July 15th what had originally been assigned for 10 weeks of talks. Politicians involved in the talks have maintained a news blackout all week and those willing to speak about this latest unionist proposal stressed the sensitivity of the situation, and betrayed something of the nervousness within the unionist camp.

There is a general reluctance to accept authorship of the plan to move quickly into North-South talks, and there is some confusion about the precise status of the proposal as between the two unionist parties.

Some sources maintain the proposal is agreed by the UUP and the DUP.

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Schedule 'A'

Actual time available

INTENDED PROGRAMME

AFTER lunchtime, teatime and coffee breaks have been deducted the original working day of 10.30 am-12.30 pm and 2.30 pm-5.00 pm with two 15 minute breaks leaves 4 hours per day. There were to be 10 weeks available and it was planned to work 3 days each week, 10 weeks x 3 days x 4 hours = 120 hours available.

INTENDED PROGRAMME = 120 hours available.

Schedule 'B'

Actual time available

PRESENT PROGRAMME

Mon 17 12.50- 1.05 & 2.30-5.00	= 2.5 hours
Tue 18 10.30-12.30 & 2.30-4.30	= 3.5 hours
Wed 19 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00	= 4.5 hours

Mon 24 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.00	= 5.5 hours
Tue 25 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-8.30	= 7.0 hours
Wed 26 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.00	= 5.5 hours

Tue 2 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-8.30	= 7.0 hours
Wed 3 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.00	= 5.5 hours
Mon 8 time not yet set	= 5.5 hours
Tue 9 time not yet set	= 5.5 hours

(but if the same as 24/26 then:—) = 7.0 hours

Wed 10 time not yet set	= 5.5 hours
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PRESENT PROGRAMME = 59 hours available.

Schedule 'C'

Actual time available

PROPOSED PROGRAMME

(The hour total is after breaks deducted)

Mon 17 12.50- 1.05 & 2.30-5.00	= 2.5 hours
Tue 18 10.30-12.30 & 2.30-4.30	= 3.5 hours
Wed 19 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00	= 4.5 hours

Mon 24 10.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.00	= 5.5 hours
Tue 25 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Wed 26 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Thu 27 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Fri 28 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.30	= 7.0 hours
Sat 29 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.30	= 7.0 hours
Mon 1 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.30	= 7.0 hours
Tue 2 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Wed 3 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Thu 4 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Fri 5 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.30	= 7.0 hours
Sat 6 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-6.30	= 7.0 hours

Mon 8 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Tue 9 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours
Wed 10 9.30-12.45 & 2.15-5.00 & 6.00-9.30	= 8.5 hours

PROPOSED WORKPLAN = 127.5 hours available.

These proposals were framed by the Democratic Unionist Party, accepted by the Ulster Unionist Party, and put to the other parties and to the Brooke talks at Stormont on Monday.

Unionists seek urgent progress in strand one

POSITION PAPER

Talks timetable

1. All delegations entered the present talks process on the same basis — the Secretary of State's 26 March statement. In the statement Mr Brooke said:

"To allow an opportunity for such a wider political dialogue, the two governments have agreed not to hold a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference between two pre-specified dates. All parties concerned will make use of this interval for intense discussions to seek the new and more broadly based agreement which I have just mentioned."

2. Unionists entered into these discussions on the basis of "a suspension of the working of the Anglo-Irish Agreement".

In our own discussions with the Secretary of State it was indicated that a period of about 10 weeks would be made available for the talks. Later, and without reference to us, the two governments announced the time-band.

We do not intend, in this document, to wrangle about the cause for delaying the talks process to deal with procedural matters which we felt could and should have been dealt with in the margins of Strand 1. Sufficient for us to state the obvious — when we commenced plenary sessions on Monday 17 June 1991, seven weeks after the bilateral talks started on Tuesday 30 April, only 4 of the 11 week time-band remained.

3. Mr Brooke's statement of 26 March clearly shows that the talks began after the last Conference meeting and will end when the next one takes place. It is therefore only the insistence on a meeting under the auspices of the Anglo-Irish Agreement that brings the agreed process to a conclusion.

4. We are anxious to make urgent progress and, in keeping with our determination to make progress in Strand 1, and thereby, if possible, to move to Strand 2, we propose a significant intensification of the talks.

5. The proposal involves a six-day week with morning,

afternoon and evening sessions on a number of days. The programme is such that we can condense the number of available hours the Secretary of State had originally proposed for the 10 week process into the time available. In effect this intensification will put the talks back on the original course in terms of available hours.

6. We not only propose that the available hours be substantially increased but suggest that the manner in which the talks are operating could be improved as soon as the preliminary presentations are completed.

We suggest a more flexible approach which allows the discussions on the workplan issues to continue while small working groups, perhaps under the Minister of State, assess and put together areas of agreement.

7. If the two formats operate in parallel it will eliminate time-wastage. The Minister of State would take ownership of any recommendations to be brought forward. He would nevertheless be guided by the working groups.

8. These proposals are a genuine attempt to preserve the talks and bring about a momentum that alone can bring success. Undoubtedly the programme we offer will cause havoc with all our diaries — we recognise the difficulties — but we feel the benefits that could flow to Northern Ireland from this process would make the additional effort worthwhile.

9. This proposal is jointly made by the two unionist delegations; acknowledges that the Minister of State will deputise for the Secretary of State from time to time; recognises that all members of each delegation will not be able to attend at all time; is not solely for plenary sessions — it will be used for some working groups and other non-plenary meetings employing a more flexible approach; reinstates the 1 July; permits 10 weeks available hours of the original plan to be carried out in the now limited period.