

Office of the Independent Chairmen

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SUMMARY RECORD OF REVIEW PLENARY SESSION - TUESDAY 24 MARCH 1997 (21.19)

Those present:

INDEPENDENT CHAIRMEN	GOVERNMENT TEAMS	PARTIES
Senator Mitchell	British Government	Alliance
Mr Holkeri	Irish Government	Labour
General de Chastelain		Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
		Progressive Unionist Party
		Sinn Féin
		Social Democratic & Labour Party
		Ulster Democratic Party
		Ulster Unionist Party

1. The Chairman convened the meeting at 21.19. He said that, following his consultations with all the participants, he recommended that the review Plenary be adjourned to 10.30 on Monday 30 March, and that it would be concluded by 12.30 on that day. In the interim, participants would proceed on the schedule agreed earlier. This was: to meet for at least four days the following week, with the fifth day to be looked at by the Business Committee, then to resume on Monday 6 April and remain in session continuously until business was concluded. The remaining issue was the proposed moratorium on press contacts. The Chairman asked whether participants wished to agree on this.

2. The UUP said it would have great difficulty with a complete blackout. Unfortunately any such vacuum would be filled by those in competition with the party. Sinn Féin said it supported the spirit and principle of the

Alliance proposal, but it was clear from the point made by the UUP that it was not going to happen. In that case, the party said the question of moving somewhere else in the six counties for the final stretch should be considered again - some sort of quarantine situation. The British Government said that if it was difficult for parties to agree to self denial as regards the media, it would be good to retain the idea of the Chairmen providing an independent official account of proceedings each day. The SDLP said that it was in favour of the Alliance suggestion. Parties needed to try and minimise the problems they created for each other. Given that "self denial" had been proposed only from the following Monday, the party suggested that participants should reflect on what sort of restraint might be agreed, and discuss the matter again on Monday. The Chairman agreed with this.

3. The British Government advised the meeting that there had been a mortar attack on an army barracks in Forkhill, but there appeared to have been no injuries. The Chairman restated the schedule. The Plenary was adjourning, to reconvene at 10.30 on Monday 30 March. At 12.30 on that day the negotiations would resume in whatever format had been decided on in the interval. The meeting was then adjourned at 21.30.

Independent Chairmen Notetakers
31 March 1998