

# Office of the Independent Chairmen

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## MEMBERS

## MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY 8 OCTOBER 1997 AT 10.00 A.M.

**CHAIRMEN:** General de Chastelain  
Mr Holkeri

**THOSE PRESENT:** British Government  
Irish Government  
Alliance  
Labour  
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition  
Progressive Unionist Party  
Sinn Féin  
Social Democratic and Labour Party  
Ulster Democratic Party  
Ulster Unionist Party

### Item 1 - Minutes of 30 September Meeting

Some participants expressed concern with the accuracy of the minutes and in particular with the last sentence of Item 6 - Confidence Building measures. Consequently the Chairman stated, for the record, that the minutes on this item were not agreed. The Committee agreed that a further discussion to attempt to resolve the point at issue would be taken today under Item 4 - Any other Business. No other amendments were proposed to the 30 September minutes.

### Item 2 - Scheduling of Strand Negotiations beyond 7 October

The Committee agreed to recommend that the schedule of negotiations for the next two weeks would be as follows. Strand One would take place on Monday 13 October, Strand Two on Tuesday 14 October, Strand Three on Wednesday 15 October, Strand Two on Monday 20 October, Strand

One on Tuesday 21 October and Strand Three on Wednesday 22 October. It was recommended that the Strand One and Strand Two meetings in both weeks should commence at 10.00 am. The Committee agreed that the timings for Strand Three meetings be left to the discretion of the co-chairpersons. The Committee also agreed that a further assessment of future Strand scheduling be taken at its next meeting in the week commencing 20 October.

**Item 3 - Determination of Numbers of Delegates and Supporters for Strand Two and Both Liaison Subcommittees**

Following a lengthy discussion the Committee agreed that the numbers of delegates and supporters for Strand Two should mirror the existing arrangements for Plenary meetings ie Governments to be permitted 3 delegates at the table plus 5 in support, large parties 3 at the table plus 3 in support and small parties 3 at the table with 2 in support. The Committee agreed to review this level of representation at its next meeting. The Committee also agreed that representation on both liaison subcommittees should comprise 2 delegates and 3 supporters for both Governments with remaining participants having 2 delegates and 2 supporters. The Chairman again outlined the Committee's earlier recommendation to permit unelected representatives to attend the liaison subcommittees in either a delegate or support role, and reported that the Chairman of the subcommittees had agreed to this proposal.

**Item 4 - Any Other Business**

- 4.1 It was decided that the scheduling and timing allocation of specific agenda items within Strands was not an issue for the Business Committee but rather the appropriate Chairman.
- 4.2 Both Governments agreed that proposals for liaison meetings between Strand Three and the participants would be developed and circulated to the Business Committee in due course.
- 4.3 There was no consensus for altering the existing seating arrangements in the main conference room.

- 4.4 Alliance informed the meeting that it viewed, as a clear breach of confidentiality, the fact that actual words spoken between two participants had been recently carried by the media. The party said it wished to remind everyone that the negotiations needed to be taken seriously and to ensure this type of incident did not re-occur. The PUP said it had always adhered to confidentiality and took the talks seriously.
- 4.5 Following further discussion on Item 6 of 30 September minutes, the meeting took note of the terms of the procedural motion adopted by the Plenary on 24 September and the apparent conflict between its paragraph 2(c) (2) and rules of procedure 17 and 18. The Committee agreed that no further action be taken on the issue since the Liaison Subcommittee on Confidence Building measures would itself be addressing the matter in due course.
- 4.6 Sinn Féin stated that it hoped all participants would take those confidence building measures, other than decommissioning, as seriously as the latter issue was presently viewed by some around the table. The UUP said that the issue of decommissioning and other confidence building measures were two different dimensions and that was why each was being dealt with by the appropriate Liaison Subcommittees of the Plenary.

The NIWC said that as a result of the fall-out from the tabling of the procedural motion (which included the apparent conflict outlined in paragraph 4.4 above), the Business Committee had to ensure that the conduct of business and the processes required to underpin this were fair and satisfactory to all concerned.

#### **Item 5 - Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee agreed to meet on Wednesday 22 October in Room 5.16 at 10.00 am.

**Independent Chairmen Notetakers  
8 October 1997**

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