

# Office of the Independent Chairmen

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## MEMBERS

## MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY 29 OCTOBER 1997 AT 11.00AM

**CHAIRMAN:** General de Chastelain

**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 22 October Meeting

The Chairman invited comment. There was none and the minutes were agreed.

### Item 2 - Scheduling of Strand Negotiations Beyond 29 October. Including Discussion of the Format to Handle Remaining Agenda Items

Following a short discussion the Committee agreed that the Chairman should undertake to discuss the issue of the date of the review plenary with the Plenary Chairman and to alert him to the fact that up to three days might be required for this session. The scheduling of the following weeks strand session was then confirmed as:-

Strand One - Monday 3 November at 1100

Strand Two - Tuesday 4 November at 1030

The Chairman invited the parties to devote some thought to dates for the Christmas recess, and perhaps to be ready to discuss the subject at the next meeting of the Business Committee. After discussion, it was agreed that a Strand Three Liaison meeting would take place on the morning of 12 November, most likely at 1030, and that the Business Committee would meet during the afternoon of the same day, at a time to be confirmed.

The question was raised as to when the two Liaison Sub-Committees would next meet. The Chairman noted that the Chairman of those two Sub-Committees, Senator Mitchell, had adjourned them at the call of the chair, with the intention to reconvene them in the case of the Liaison Sub-Committee on decommissioning, after the submission of the Commission on Decommissioning's report on decommissioning schemes. The Chairman noted that the Commission on Decommissioning had presented the two Governments at official level with its initial report the previous day (28 October), to meet its intention of doing so before the end of October. He believed the Governments would wish to have at least a week to digest the report, after which the Chairman of the Decommissioning Liaison Sub-Committee might wish to call a meeting. The Chairman declined to offer an opinion on when the Confidence Building Measures Sub-Committee might meet but a number of members suggested that such a meeting should take place soon. The Chairman undertook to consult Senator Mitchell with regard to scheduling meetings of both Sub-Committees.

#### **Start Time for Future Meetings**

Alliance proposed that morning sessions should begin no earlier than 1030 and no later than 1100. This proposal was not agreed. It was agreed however that the Strand Two meeting on Tuesday 4 November should commence at 1030 and the Chairman agreed to consult the other Chairmen on the general matter of starting times.

#### **Any Other Business**

Labour raised the matter of the length of meetings. The Strand Two meeting on 28 October had been an arduous 3½ hours session without a break. The party proposed that allowance should be made for a half hour break after say 1½ hours. The UUP said that this was a matter for the strand Chairmen

and that circumstances might preclude the application of a general rule. After discussion it was agreed that the decision to have an adjournment to break up a long session should be left to the respective Chairmen, although it was noted that members were free to request a brief adjournment at any time

**Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the Committee would meet on Wednesday 12 November 1997 at a time (in the afternoon) to be notified to the parties.

**Independent Chairmen Notetakers  
3 November 1997**

bcmi/04/97