

Office of the Independent Chairmen

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MEMBERS

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE ON MONDAY 12 JANUARY 1998 AT 1200

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

The Chairman convened the meeting and thanked participants for accepting a two hour delay in the original scheduled start time for the session. The Chairman outlined the reasons for the delay and proposed that, in advance of discussing the previously circulated agenda items, the Committee should consider the question of when, and in what format the "Propositions on Heads of Agreement" paper, prepared by both Governments and being distributed presently to party offices, should be discussed.

Following a lengthy discussion which included an adjournment for lunch, the Committee recommended that a Plenary meeting should be held 30 minutes after the Committee concluded its business. It was further agreed that the "Propositions on Heads of Agreement" paper would be tabled at such a Plenary, but not debated or discussed. Furthermore the Committee recommended that discussion of the Governments' paper would occur the following day, Tuesday 13 January at 1400.

Given that this displaced a pre scheduled meeting of the Liaison Sub-committee on Confidence Building Measures, the Committee recommended that this meeting be rescheduled for 1100 on Tuesday 13 January. The Chairman then moved on to the prepared agenda.

Item 1 - Minutes of 8 December

The UUP formally stated that the minutes for item 4 - scheduling of visits to London and Dublin - contained no reference to the party not agreeing the proposed dates for the visit to London. The UUP had raised an objection at that meeting so it could not agree the minutes on this point. With the exception of this point, the minutes were agreed as circulated.

Following an invitation from the Chairman to develop its original point, the UUP raised a proposal to postpone the London visit until early March. Following discussion, and after a second adjournment to allow the Plenary meeting to be convened, the Committee recommended that the London visit, scheduled for 26 -28 January should proceed with the main emphasis being on Strand Two negotiations. The Committee further agreed that it would hold a special meeting on 14 January at 1500 to consider the size of party delegation travelling to London, following requests from some participants to reduce the costs involved. The British Government said it would bring forward proposals on this issue in advance of that meeting.

Item 2 - Discussion and review of the modalities, format etc for dealing with cross-strand issues (as envisaged in final sentence of Rule 13)

The Committee agreed to defer this item until a future meeting.

Item 3 - Liaison Sub-Committee on Decommissioning: Change of time of next meeting

The change of time for this meeting, proposed by the Review Plenary prior to Christmas, was supported by the Committee.

Item 4 - Any Other Business

None raised.

Item 5 - Date of Next Meeting

Beyond the meeting called for 14 January, the Committee agreed that the next meeting would take place in the week commencing 19 January, at the call of the Chair, but no later than the afternoon of Wednesday 21 January.

**Independent Chairmen Notetakers
22 January 1998**

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