

THE TEXT

It is necessary to settle the text, if possible, at this meeting.

2. We have given the Irish side notice of some proposed amendments. On their side they have volunteered to produce a concluding paragraph by way of peroration.

3. Attached are:

(i) JD.15: that is the text which emerged from the meeting of the Butler/Nally group with provisionally agreed amendments underlined.

(ii) JD.15A which marks current British proposed additions and deletions including those from Mr Molyneaux. (The text also reflects the decision to have the constitutional guarantee in paragraph 2 and not in paragraph 4).

Points to make

4. Perhaps I could take my proposed amendments, of which you have had advance notice, in turn.

5. The amendment we propose in paragraph 2 is intended to clarify and strengthen the drafting. The wording officials canvassed appeared to detach the statutory constitutional guarantee from the other guarantees which each Government has given. I do not think we need do this.

The additional words proposed in paragraph 3, which I believe have been accepted on your side, reflects the fact that Ireland is used in the same sentence as both a geographical and a political entity. The addition of the words "the island of" should make things clear.

7. On the basis that we might agree that the constitutional guarantee should be taken out of paragraph 4, I believe we need to balance the opening. The wording we have proposed preserves the "no selfish interest" formula in its simply form, as you wanted. But I think it is right, and important, to make clear at the beginning our concern to uphold the democratic wishes of the people of Northern Ireland, but in doing so to make it clear that this applies whether they wish to stay in the union or support a sovereign united Ireland. I believe this formulation in fact prepares the ground for, and strengthens, the next sentence with its assertion that we have no selfish strategic or economic interest. [Note: The words "greater number" are included at Mr Molyneaux's suggestion. He also suggested the deletion of "assist" in the middle of the page.]

8. Our proposals to remove from the middle of the paragraph the words "including a sovereign united Ireland" is in a sense consequential. If you agree to open the paragraph as we suggest then we have already clearly mentioned our commitment to a sovereign united Ireland if that is what people want. In any event the next sentence, concerning self-determination, repeats the point again. [Note: As expected, Mr Molyneaux strongly supports this amendment.]

9. The addition of the word "equally" in the penultimate sentence is intended to clarify the meaning and to strengthen our readiness to underline any measure of agreement, without particular preferences.

10. We propose to delete the last words of that sentence and to

replace them with the word "so". This is partly for more economical drafting. It also means that we co-opt into this sentence a carefully balanced formulation of the one proceeding. We do not want to have to repeat all those qualifications and explanatory phrases; but equally we do not want by using a slightly different formulation, to imply that there is a different test in this sentence from that in the previous one. I cannot see that this should give you any difficulty.

11. We propose to remove "within" from the penultimate sentence of paragraph 10 (previously 12). It implies an early meeting. We should also like to add the words "their own" to the final sentence of the Declaration. This is merely to clarify and emphasise that the Convention, when you come to announce it, is an arrangement all for your own. I believe it should be straightforward.

12. I believe you have it in mind to propose a final paragraph by way of peroration. For our part we think it right to reassert, in more explicit terms that the two Governments remain committed to the Talks process. We made this clear in our Joint Statement issued here in Brussels on 29 October [copy attached as Annex C]. The sentences we have proposed, which probably fit best in the final paragraph of peroration, reflect the formulations we agreed then.