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27 JAN 1998
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FROM: ROBERT TRAVIS
CPL
27 January 1998

- cc PS/Mr Murphy (DFP, B&L)
- PS/Mr Ingram (DED, B&L)
- PS/PUS (B&L)
- PS/Mr Semple
- Mr Thomas
- Mr Steele
- Mr Leach
- Mr Bell
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Stephens
- Mr Woods (B&L)
- Mr Beeton
- Mr Brooker
- Mr Hill
- Mr Ferguson
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Sanderson, Cab Off (via CPL)
- Mr Ferguson, RID FCO
- HMA Dublin
- Mr N Warner
- Mr Holmes, No 10

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

RECEIVED 30 JAN 1998

NC/S7/1

1. cc Mr Smith

Mr Carson

2. Mr Brown

Mr. 1.

PS/Secretary of State

TALKS SUMMARY, 26 JANUARY 1998

The day was dominated by discussions about the fate of the UDP in the light of the UFF statement on Friday. The UDP left of their own volition at 4.00 pm shortly before the two Governments announced that they were no longer entitled to attend by reason of having breached the Mitchell principles. Agreement on Strand Two papers remains elusive in the face of opposing requirements on the content of the paper. The Irish are expressing Sinn Fein concerns about the imbalance between the Strands created by the 'Propositions'. The Unionist Party object to any step back from 'Propositions'.

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UDP Departure

The Irish were in a strong and unequivocal mood exhorting the British to be likewise in their treatment of the UDP. The departure of the UDP, they argued, was necessary to preserve the credibility of the Talks. The Secretary of State preferred to explore the options available; as the day progressed meetings with the parties in plenary and bilaterals made the continued participation of the UDP as untenable. The main constitutional parties (Alliance, UUP and SDLP) favoured the UDP being put out: Sinn Fein avoided advocating expulsion - the rules were not theirs but the Governments, the application of the rules left no option - possibly in order to avoid counter allegations. The PUP publicly objected to the departure of the UDP; in a bilateral with the Secretary of State they said that in similar circumstances they would not remain in the Talks, adding that in the event of the UDP's departure they would remain in the Talks, for how long they could not say. The departure of the UDP would create pressure on the PUP; some people were intent on destabilising the Talks.

The two Governments announced their decision to the parties in plenary at 4.45 pm.

The UDP in a prior press conference said that they were not walking away from the Talks. They added that they had gone to extreme lengths to bring an end to violence whilst others who are also responsible for violence were allowed to remain in the Talks.

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Strand Two

The Secretary of State held a bilateral with Sinn Fein to discuss the Strand Two 'cross-border' paper. Sinn Fein were adamant that the paper should seek to redress the imbalance created in the strands by the 'Propositions' paper. They were opposed to any further development in the detail of the arrangements in Strand One without 'parity of detail' in Strand Two. Any cross-border institution should have executive powers; policy making and implementation powers; dynamic; mandated by both Governments and stand alone. They were particularly concerned that any paper tabled should be a joint paper expressing a shared view broadly based on 'Frameworks'. If the Governments could not agree how could the parties be expected to.

Mr Murphy had a bilateral meeting with the UUP. Mr Trimble was in a defiant mood. He was opposed to the inclusion of any text from 'Frameworks' in a Strand Two paper. If the Governments viewed 'Frameworks' as an option he could live with that, however, if they said that they were committed to 'Frameworks' they would view this as a repudiation of 'Propositions': the Strand Two paper as proposed was trying to make up for 'black Monday' (12 January) in an attempt to appease nationalists.

(Signed)

ROBERT TRAVIS

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