

RELEASE IN FULL

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To: H
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Here's the update, pieced together from various sources:

Starting at around 3 pm Friday, Adams and McGuinness returned to Hillsborough to meet with Robinson and Arlene Foster. The four talked privately for several hours and then asked for the draft papers to review. The discussion continued until around 1 am when the parties left Hillsborough. (Foster's presence is apparently very helpful. Her relationship with the SF leaders is much more positive and direct, treating them as equal colleagues.)

Woodward and Irish FM Martin will meet with Adams and Robinson separately this afternoon to assess where the talks are. The talks last night/early morning ended more positively and if that is still the case there may be a decision to push on today to see if agreement can be reached. It is equally possible that the two ministers and DUP/SF will decide to wind up today and resume on Monday.

Brown and Cowen have spoken this morning and will speak again late this afternoon.

The issue is still parades. Robinson needs some certainty of change on parades. It is important for him politically within the DUP, but also externally since this has become a symbol of whether he has achieved something or compromised too much. Adams and SF have moved very far from their original positions on parades, adding that Robinson has also moved.

The DUP linkage of the timeframes for devolution and parades is not Robinson's goal but DUP deputy party leader Nigal Dods. Logistically, such a linkage would be impossible without delaying devolution given that the parades framework requires consultation, legislation, and implementation.

The role of Justice Minister and his/her relationship to the Executive has been agreed. Other issues, such as Irish language act, N-S bodies, etc, while symbolic and emotive for SF and the nationalists community can be dealt with.