



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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CHAIRMAN'S RECORD

FULL MINUTE OF THE SECOND PLENARY MEETING OF STRAND 2, HELD IN LANCASTER HOUSE, LONDON, ON TUESDAY 7 JULY 1992

1. The Chairman opened the proceedings by asking for the agreement of the minutes of the previous day's proceedings which had been circulated to all delegations. Mr Hume sought clarification of the last sentence in paragraph 4 of the minutes dealing with detailed questioning and responses to presentations. A long debate followed which centred on what was meant by questioning or cross examination and when this should be done. Mr Andrews broadly concurred with Mr Hume's point. Mr Maginnis suggested that questions should be asked as appropriate and necessary and under the guidance of the Chairman. Dr Paisley's understanding of the minutes was that they were correct as drafted. Mr Andrews felt that the process would be a long one and that it would not be helpful to protract it at this stage. Dr Alderdice emphasised the need for an opportunity to clarify the content of the papers - otherwise peoples' questions might be based on misunderstandings. Sir Patrick Mayhew expressed the hope that the theory might be worse than the practicalities. If a question needed to be posed and if the Chairman was content, it could be put and the party could decide if they wanted to answer the question immediately or to reserve their answer for a later date. Mr Hume made it clear that he understood "responses" to mean responses to opening presentations. The Chairman suggested, and it was agreed, that the 2 Unionist Parties should make their opening presentations and the problem of dealing with questions could be handled as it arose.

2. Mr Andrews referred to the Secretary of State's statement of 26 March 1991 and specifically to the issue of confidentiality. He drew attention to an article which had appeared in the day's Irish Times which, he claimed, was an

exact lift from a statement which had been made by Dr Paisley in the Strand 3 formation meeting the previous week. He raised the point "more in sorrow than in anger". Mr Maginnis emphasised that the confidentiality provision was specific to papers and dialogue within the workings of the Strand. It could not be extended to cover the general position of parties on issues. Dr Alderdice went into greater detail on the understandings relating to confidentiality. He reminded the delegations that it included the questions of complete confidentiality covering all dealings of the Strand; the right to publish one's own document if one so wished; and the understanding that if part of a document was leaked, the whole document could be published in order for the party concerned to allow everyone to see the context in which the leaked portion sat.

3. Dr Paisley assured the meeting that he had not given any interview to anyone on this occasion. He was not prepared to give a blank cheque to his political enemies by letting people leak lies and not have a right to put the record straight. If he was going to be misrepresented, he would want to make known what he had actually said. Mr Andrews made it clear that he was not accusing anyone, but merely drawing attention to a serious matter.

4. Sir Ninian reiterated the need to maintain confidentiality. He proposed that nothing should be published by any political party. There might be some temptation for parties to procure leaks to enable full documents to be published. In future any party which felt that it had been misrepresented in the media should inform Sir Ninian and take no action without his blessing.

5. Mr Molyneaux requested that the confidentiality provisions should be extended to cover the activities of the Governments' Press Officers. Indeed, ^{it was proposed that} all press officers should be excluded from the building. At Sir Ninian's invitation, Sir Patrick and Mr Andrews assured the meeting that no

information, spins or glosses would be given to the media over and above the daily agreed media statement.

6. The minutes of the meeting were approved and the Chairman called ^{upon} ~~open~~ the two Unionist parties to deliver their presentations. Dr Paisley made the presentation on behalf of the UDUP ^{and}. When this was completed the meeting was adjourned for lunch.

7. Following the adjournment, the Chairman called upon Mr Maginnis to deliver the presentation on behalf of the UUP. On ^{its} completion ~~of the statement~~, the Chairman asked if copies would be available of both Unionist papers ^{and} and was advised that they would. An adjournment was requested to allow consideration of the Unionist papers. The Chairman suggested that discussions should recommence at 2.15 pm when delegations could question the individual participants on matters arising from their opening submissions. Questions should be designed to seek clarification on unclear points and the questioning would be structured on the same basis as the delivery of the original submissions. The Chairman pointed out that it must be recognised that parties would not always be in a position to reply directly to particular questions and that the need to consider and to give written responses must be recognised.

8. Dr Alderdice pointed out that there were differences of understanding as to how Stage II would progress and suggested an early meeting of a Business Committee. The Chairman suggested that a meeting should be held during the forthcoming adjournment. It was agreed that the Committee would be constituted along the lines of that used at Stage I with two members from each party.

9. Mr Hume requested a later resumption than 2.15 pm to allow time for consideration of the Unionist papers. Following discussion it was agreed that the session would reconvene at 3.00 pm.

following the lunchtime adjournment the Chairman invited the meeting to proceed to the questioning and elucidation of opening statements, commencing with the presentation by the Alliance Party. He stated that it had been agreed at the Business Committee meeting held during the adjournment that delegations being questioned should be free to answer immediately or to reserve their position and respond in written form when formal responses to presentations were being delivered.

Mr Andrews stated that the Irish Government delegation would wish to respond generally at the end of questioning both to the opening presentations and to questions asked of them. Mr McGimpsey stated that the UUP understood that all delegations should be on an equal footing and urged the Irish Government to respond to questions as they were asked. Dr Paisley argued that all delegations should be obliged to answer points of clarification and was supported by Mr Molyneaux. Mr Andrews, suggesting that he was being misrepresented, stated that he was prepared to answer all questions; he had suggested one manner of doing so but was prepared to find another solution. Dr Paisley again emphasised the need for debate and exchange of views at this stage. Mr Maginnis suggested moving immediately to questioning of the Alliance presentation to see how the procedure would work. The Chairman proposed that the questioning should begin: the experience of the questioning of the Alliance Party paper might resolve the problem for other delegations.

Mr Maginnis asked the Alliance Party for clarification of the proposal in its paper for the establishment of a Tripartite Council.

Dr Alderdice stated that the Party had examined the working of the Anglo-Irish Council and, in the interests of establishing a body which would not be incongruent with the X arrangements for its work, was suggesting the possibility of

"adding a chair" so that, in addition to representatives of the British and Irish Governments, representatives of a new Northern Ireland administration would be present at meetings in a consultative capacity. This new body might be named the British-Irish Conference; or perhaps a better name might be found. In addition, it might be possible to envisage a series of institutions of a tripartite nature.

Mr Molyneux asked whether the Party had considered the role of a body such as a British-Irish Parliamentary Body. Dr Alderdice stated that he envisaged three types of body:

- (a) Tripartite conference as outlined already;
- (b) a body involving Members of Parliament, backbenchers, which would take up such issues as environment, transport, emigration, control of trafficking of illicit drugs;
- (c) a series of North-South commissions at official level to examine cooperation on an island-wide basis in such areas as agriculture and tourism. The commissions could be staffed at official level or on an appointed basis.

Mr Andrews asked Dr Alderdice to explain the statement in his presentation that the people of Northern Ireland "are a historic and coherent community". In reply, Dr Alderdice stated that it was his party's view that certain phenomena such as statehood, constitutions and legal arrangements were clearly open to exactitude. Matters of the heart were more difficult. The ideas of "community" and "nationhood" fell into this latter category. It was possible for an individual to owe allegiance to a state, for instance, but to feel himself part of one or more nations. He suggested that there were analogies in human relationships and that as these were matters of feelings and strong emotions they could not be dealt with with exactitude. Mr Mallon intervened to ask whether Dr Alderdice could see a clear

coherence of interest between the people of, for instance, Pomeroy and the people of Bangor.

In reply, Dr Alderdice suggested that in reality it was difficult anywhere to define the concept of "community". The creation of borders inevitably led to the creation of minorities of some kind. However, having drawn a border, it was possible to pull together a community of some kind within it. Mr Mallon stated that the Alliance Party had agreed ~~to~~ⁱⁿ the Common Themes Paper agreed in Strand 1 that there were "two distinct communal identities within Northern Ireland" and suggested that Dr Alderdice now seemed to be contradicting this assertion. Dr Alderdice stated that there was a historic approach which suggested that the people of the North-East of the island, largely speaking, formed a coherent community. Mr Wilson intervened to draw attention to Dr Alderdice's drawing of an analogy with human relations. He suggested that Ulster ("Ulsteria") be seen as a woman, 40% of whom reacted positively to his paying court to her while 60% was less enthusiastic; he would wish to continue paying court to her in the hope that that 60% might be persuaded to be more positive towards him. Dr Alderdice responded that in the field of human relationships, if 60% of a woman says "no", a man was ill-advised to press his attentions too strongly.

Mr Mallon asked whether the Alliance Party should not have made a stronger reference in its statement to the need to take action to increase the level of confidence in the system of law and justice in Northern Ireland. Dr Alderdice stated that the reference was a summary of the Party's analysis of the problem in Strand 1; the Alliance Party accepted that there were situations in which people were justified in not having confidence in the system of justice and had put forward proposals for changes during Strand 1 discussions.

Mr Flynn noted that the Alliance Party had expressed support for regional development and asked whether they would agree that the drawing of a border could divide a region from its natural hinterland, ^{charony} damaging its development prospects and raising the possibility that it would be a positive development to reconstitute the region. In reply, Dr Alderdice expressed his party's strong support for EC regional development policies. He stated that he did not necessarily agree that the border divided a region and stated that problems often arose from decisions to join regions which did not naturally go together. Ireland could possibly be regarded as including three or four regions, one of them Northern Ireland. Mr Flynn asked what his attitude was to cooperation between areas on either side of the border in the interests of regional development. Dr Alderdice emphasised his support for cooperation rather than separation but stated that he disagreed with Mr Flynn on ^λ what constituted the region in this case. Mr Flynn asked whether it was not legitimate for the community in the North-East of Ireland which felt an affinity with the community in the Republic to seek a political, legal and social accommodation with that community in order to obtain the benefits of citizenship. Dr Alderdice stated that it was legitimate for a community to have an aspiration and the Alliance Party strongly supported this traditional liberal value; it was impossible, however, for a community in one state to expect to have legal arrangements linking it to other communities in other states

Mr Flynn asked if Dr Alderdice would expand on the role of the suggested North-South Commissions. Dr Alderdice explained that in the area of tourism, for instance, where there were currently two organisations (Bord Failte and the NI Tourist Board) attempting to attract similar categories of people to visit the island of Ireland there was enormous room for cooperation whether by the establishment of a joint instrument or by joint arrangements for development of both areas. His party supported the principle of cooperating in

as many areas as possible to the mutual benefit of both parts of the island.

Mr Hume returned to the Alliance description of the people of Northern Ireland as forming "a historic and coherent community". He ~~repeated~~^{SUPPOSED} Mr Mallon's point that this seemed in contradiction of the Strand 1 agreement that there were two distinct communal identities in Northern Ireland. The SDLP approach was that there were two such identities which required to be recognised and accommodated. Dr Alderdice stated that his party had agreed to the Common Themes wording on identities in a spirit of compromise. They felt, however, that the concept of "allegiance" should also be taken into account. The Alliance Party approach was to ensure that everyone, of whatever identity, had a part to play in government and that the inter-relationship between the islands should be recognised by the establishment of a series of tripartite and North-South institutions. ~~He disagreed with Mr Hume's question asking whether he was suggesting identity could be expressed as~~

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He disagreed with Mr. Hume's question as to whether he was suggesting the identity of a community could be expressed adequately if it had representation at the highest level: for instance, could the unionist identity receive full expression by virtue of representation in the Dail?

Mr. Hume suggested that the effect of the Alliance Party approach would be to force one community to show allegiance to the state, and therefore to cause division; it was necessary to acknowledge the twin allegiances in NI and to accommodate them within agreed political structures. Mr. Alderdice responded that it was justifiable to speak of Irishness in terms of identity separate from allegiance to either of the states on the island: it was not necessary to think in terms of allegiance to a state as a characteristic of Irishness. Mr. Hume stated that the Alliance Party was suggesting that in a divided state one community would have to be forced to give allegiance to a particular state because it lived within the area of that state. Mr. Alderdice replied that it was elementary anywhere in the world that the population of a state should give allegiance to it and stated that it was wrong to insist that Irishness was about allegiance to a particular state. The EC would not have advanced as it had if certain border issues had not been accepted. In this case, history had decreed a border in Ireland; it was necessary to accept and respect the fact that it was there and to work on areas of practical cooperation to build closer cooperation between the two parts of the island.

In response to Mr. Hume's reference to the development of Benelux, Mr. Alderdice stated that if arrangements were being suggested between the two islands, the Alliance Party could find them interesting. Mr. Hume stated that the SDLP was proposing the accommodation of the two identities, both of which transcended NI, and the building of linkages between the people of the two islands. Dr. Alderdice stated that his party would support an approach which sought to build on relationships between the islands.

Mr. Robinson asked whether the Alliance Party was indicating that it viewed the two traditions in NI as a single community which, as a whole, had a right of self-determination. Dr. Alderdice agreed.

Mr. Andrews suggested that there was a problem akin to schizophrenia in people living on the island of Ireland claiming to be both Irish and British. He suggested it might be useful to substitute the idea of being Irish and European. Dr. Alderdice stated that he saw it as possible to have two or more aspects to identity. Identity was not a matter of cast-iron exactitude. The Alliance Party was interested in proposals for the development of closer North-South relations and had proposed a series of institutions in that regard.

In response to a question from Mr. McGimpsey on the relationship between the concepts of community and nationhood, X Dr. Alderdice stated that in his view the issues of nationhood and statehood were separate; to link them was to cause problems. The notion of a nation state was dangerous. The development of the EC was very important in that it had A begun a move to broader allegiances. A move to develop closer cooperation between both parts of the island was important at this stage; the long term implications might be for future generations to decide. Mr. McGimpsey raised the issue of Human Rights and asked whether the Alliance Party supported the view that the Irish Republic should have the benefit of a Bill of Rights. Dr. Alderdice noted that both Governments were signatories to the European Convention and stated that it would be useful if common arrangements on the island of Ireland covered not only economic issues but also human rights. He would not accept, however, that any difficulties between the British and the Irish Governments should hold up progress on a Bill of Rights for NI, which was integral to the success of this process.

X Mr. McGrady asked whether, if one were to label the two identities in NI "nationalist" and "unionist", the Alliance Party accepted that the unionist identity had full expression in present circumstances in the UK and the nationalist identity did not. Mr. Alderdice repeated the view that there were probably more than two identities in NI: many people felt themselves to be both British and Irish, in different combinations. He did not adhere to the SDLP analysis of the problem: the question of identity was more complex than their approach suggested and the only way forward was to develop institutions which would allow people to come together. He rejected Mr. McGrady's suggestion that he (Dr. Alderdice) defined himself as a unionist: the Alliance Party was Pro-Union. Many unionists were integrationists. The Alliance party favoured a type of Home Rule arrangement within the UK and their hearts were in the North East of the island. ;He suggested that his party had participated in the 1974 power sharing arrangement in a manner which showed it favoured parity of esteem between the two traditions. Mr. McGrady asked whether the Party still supported the creation of a Council of Ireland, as had been envisaged in the Sunningdale Agreement. Dr. Alderdice stated that he viewed the move from the concept of the Irish dimension to the Anglo-Irish context as helpful. The Alliance Party was now suggesting the creation of North-South and Tripartite arrangements. They had no problem in supporting the creation of a 1974-type Council of Ireland but the problem was that other parties did.

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X Mr. Flynn noted that Dr. Alderdice had stated that the sense of community could not be built simply on the basis of sharing an island and asked how a community could have been built simply on the basis of sharing Northern Ireland. Dr. Alderdice stated that the sense of community in NI was based on historic experience, not merely geographic location. A sense of community was based on what people felt and it was wrong to infer from the fact that people fought with each other that they did not constitute a coherent community. That would be to adopt a superficial approach.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Alderdice for his responses to very searching questions and asked the meeting to consider a number of organisational questions. He noted that the Irish delegation would have to leave at 12.30 on Wednesday. The Business Committee had concluded that a Thursday meeting in London was not possible and that the Plenary should resume in Belfast on Tuesday, 14 July. It was hoped that the two Governments would at that stage be in a position to make an announcement relating to the gap in Anglo-Irish Conference meetings, which would bear on the question of future Plenary meetings.

Dr. Paisley stated that it would not be possible to meet on Tuesday as certain delegations had obligations to attend Black Preceptory celebrations on that day: Mr. Molyneaux was the Grand Master and surely could not attend. He stated he was prepared to meet on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. He also stated that it should be put on the record that if the Governments wanted to hold another Anglo-Irish Conference meeting in order to discuss the gap, this would bring down the curtains on the talks process. The Chairman stated that the UDUP representatives had had a full say at the Business Committee. Dr. Paisly responded that that had been the Business Committee and not the Plenary. The Chairman emphasised that at the Business Committee the only suggestion that a Tuesday meeting might not be possible had come from other delegations, not from the UDUP; no other delegation had attempted to put the UDUP in a difficult position. Mr. Molyneaux stated that he had been given leave of absence by his delegation as regards attendance at a Tuesday meeting but the UUP could field a team.

It was agreed by delegations that if a Tuesday meeting did not suit one party, they would hold the next meeting instead on Wednesday morning, 15 July.

The Irish and British Government delegations agreed to discuss with each other the question of the gap in Conference meetings and to make a statement on the matter as soon as possible.

A short media release was agreed and the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 5.30 p.m.