



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
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The Secretary of State, at a Chamber of Commerce dinner in Antrim last night, made the following points about the talks process:

- All the participants in the process had worked very hard;
- There are still "formidable obstacles" to be overcome;
- "Things are never going to be the same again" even if the current range of talks have not reached the ambitious objective that we seek

Jim Molyneux, who also attended the dinner, was interviewed afterwards (transcript attached) and made the following points:

- "Even if the talks are not 100% successful, Ulster must not slide back and will not slide back to square one";
- NI political parties can "sit down around the table, at any time, and talk about practical problems and, what's more important, resolve those problems."
- the talks "set out the position of all the participants, all six of them more clearly than before. In a way I feared that that would happen because by doing that you automatically set them far apart, and then they find it very difficult to move towards each other."

There were also interviews with Dr. John Alderdice (attached) and Mr. Peter Robinson (transcript ~~in preparation~~<sup>attached</sup>). Alderdice struck a gloomy note arguing that the people of Northern Ireland had expected progress in the talks, and by implication, had not got it. He also characterised John Hume's speech at the SDLP Party Conference as "deeply disappointing" - some of the things that SDLP delegates said at the weekend suggested that they were even further way from the Unionists. The Irish Government, on the other hand, "is in a state of considerable confusion at the moment and has been for quite some time now."

Peter Robinson made the following points:

- each party will be able to indicate, to its area of support, the work that has been done;
- nobody is expecting that Heads of Agreement will be the outcome of the talks deliberations - that is not to say that the process has failed;
- we will have to wait and see whether there will be a resumption of the process

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Interview with Mr. James Molyneaux, Good Morning Ulster Programme, BBC Northern Ireland, Tuesday, 10 November 1992

Interviewer: The Ulster Unionist leader Jim Molyneaux was asked if he was sad to see this latest round of Talks coming to an end.

Mr. Molyneaux: It is sad, in a way, if one believes that it is all going to stop here but you will have picked up the theme from the Secretary of State's speech and that it was forecast, in a way, in the President's speech that there is a great lot of useful practical work to be done in this province of Northern Ireland. And you will remember, not that you might have took much notice of it, I said exactly that in my Conference speech a couple of week's ago, that even if I said that and I want to repeat it now, that even if the Talks are not 100% successful, Ulster must not slide back and will not slide back to square one, and I hold that even more strongly tonight.

Interviewer: So will you definitely be coming back to talk ?

Mr. Molyneaux: In a different level but I think that colleagues in the Talks have come to the conclusion that there was some merit in what I said way back at the beginning that we shouldn't try to get on the high wire act, it's not a circus, that we should develop that which we have been capable of in Parliament as leaders of Parties in a way that the GB Party leaders can not do, that is, sit down around the table, at any time, and talk about practical problems and what's more important resolve those problems.

Interviewer: How do you view the call by Mr. Stewart for political leaders and businessmen to get around the table to sort out an agreed agenda ?

Mr. Molyneaux: I welcome that very much that the Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, the whole lot of them, should use us

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more because we are elected and somebody might say well paid to provide a service. My regret for all of my political lifetime has been that there has been a wall between us, a paper wall. I hope that that is now breaking down and that we are going to get to grips with dealing with the problems of this Province and I am afraid we are going to have more given the economic situation in the years ahead. That means we've got to get down to work immediately after tomorrow and pull together.

Interviewer: Jim Molyneaux. He was also asked if he thought anything had been achieved by six months of dialogue between the local parties and the two Governments.

Mr. Molyneaux: Certainly they have identified the different stun points and set out the position of all the participants, all six of them more clearly than before. In a way, I feared that would happen because by doing that you automatically set them so far apart, and then they find it very difficult to move towards each other. It goes back to Humphery Atkins idea of calling his Conference in 1979, and I said to him "you are putting them all on slip fences from which they won't be able to move" and I think that is the drawback with that kind of summitry but I think that's all behind us now. We are going now to have friendly, informal, continuous discussions on a whole range of moderate, not just the political problems, but as you have heard tonight, reflected in the Secretary of State's words on the whole range of unemployment, the health service, the problems of industry, commerce and everything else.

Note:

Interviewer: Are there any structures coming on stream though, Mr. Molyneaux. Have you put anything down on paper or the other leaders on this front.

Mr. Molyneaux: Well, look we don't need structures. We didn't need structures to help John Parker establish the

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Harland and Woolf rescue operation. We helped him to persuade Mrs. Thatcher to do in that week which she flatly refused to do for the Sunderland shipyard where you have grass growing on the slipways now and Harland and Woolf is prospering because we helped Harland and Woolf as four parties cooperating as one.

Interviewer: Who do you blame for the Talks .....

Mr. Molyneaux: I am not in a position of allocating blame and I hope nobody else is going to indulge in that negative pastime.



Interview with Mr. Peter Robinson, Good Morning Ulster  
Radio Programme, BBC Northern Ireland,  
Tuesday, 10 November 1992

Studio: The Deputy leader of the DUP, Peter Robinson told Tim Jenkins that it would take until the last moment of talking to decide whether any kind of joint declaration could be signed.

Mr. Robinson: When we do leave the building, every party will be able to indicate to their own area of support, the work they have done during the period of time that the talks have proceeded, the benefit, if any, that they see that the process has been and where the difficulties have been during that process. I think we need to have that degree of honesty with the people of Northern Ireland so they might know if there are areas of difficulty, what they have been, and whether we feel that there are ways of overcoming those areas of difficulty in the future.

Interviewer: Are you alluding there to slight agreement there among the parties that there has been some movement. Will you actually come to some, what's been referred to as "Heads of Agreement" ?

Mr. Robinson: I would have been the first to line up if I thought that it was possible to reach an agreement on a way forward for our Province. I don't think that anybody is expecting that will be the outcome of our deliberations, but that is not to say that the process itself has failed, and I think it will become evident when parties give their public reports as to what has been going on, the areas that have been covered, the importance of what has taken place and the very real difficulties that have occurred and undoubtedly you cannot do that without indicating where you felt the process confronted obstacles, how major those obstacles were, and what way those obstacles, in your view, should have been dealt with.

Interviewer: Will you striving towards an agreed statement ?

Mr. Robinson: Well, I would imagine that the Chairman or the delegations will either agree a statement to sum up the process or agree that each Delegation should do that individually, but that's a matter for the Delegations to decide at the Plenary meeting later this afternoon.

Interviewer: Because of the circumstances you describe there will be the temptation for this meeting to break up in acrimony with recrimination ?

Mr. Robinson: Well, I think when we are dealing with politicians who clearly come and have a different angle of vision, it's very likely that each of them will have a different prospective of what has been of benefit and where the difficulties lie, and I think each of them will want to spell out to their own community, or a section of the community, what they believe the position is from their own standpoint, and I think that it is very likely that there will not be universal agreement as to either what progress was made, or indeed, what the main problem areas were, such is the nature of politics anywhere in the world.

Interviewer: But any gains that have been made will remain ?

Mr. Robinson: Well, you'll have to determine first of all, the nature of any gains or indeed whether they were any gains from the process, and I am not going to prejudge what might be in the content of any of the Delegations remarks during the course of this evening's remarks.

Interviewer: Nor indeed speculate on when a Talks process might begin again ?

Mr. Robinson: Nor speculate on whether a Talks process would take place again.

Interviewer: The Ulster Unionist party went to Dublin, you did not. When the local Government elections come up in May will you be pointing at that in your local election campaign ?

Mr. Robineon: I will be very surprised if that was going to be the issue that votes were going to hinge on in the local Government election, and can I indicate to you fairly clearly that as far as the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party was concerned, we made it abundantly clear within our Party and outside, that there was a necessity to have movement on the part of the Irish Republic in relation to Articles 2 and 3. I regret that movement did not come. That movement would have allowed us to take part in the Dublin meeting but, unfortunately, there has been no such movement and that, of course, has been one of the difficulties that this process have had to face.

Interviewer: There is an election in the Irish Republic in December. What could be the influence on our Talks process here of either a strengthening of Fianna Fail's position as regards its position in the Dail or a weakening of its position, and possibly a new administration entirely ?

Mr. Robinson: I don't want to interfere in the election process in the Irish Republic but clearly in as far as it has an impact upon issues such as the territorial claim, it will be watched with very great interest here in Northern Ireland.



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Interview with Mr. John Alderdice, Good Morning Ulster  
Radio Programme, BBC Northern Ireland  
Tuesday, 10 November 1992

Interviewer: It remains to be seen how much recrimination will follow the break-up of the Talks, but already the Alliance party leader John Alderdice has criticised the SDLP and the Irish Government over their stance on the Republic's claim over Northern Ireland. Dr. Alderdice is with me now. Good morning to you. You have not wasted much time in slinging mud.

Mr. Alderdice: No, I don't think that's the position. I think that what is important is that the people of Northern Ireland know what's been going on and for the past six months we have been involved in very intensive negotiations. And of course it is true that we have exchanged papers, we have restored each other's positions and so on, and that is in itself useful and I would not deny that. But I don't think that's what the people of Northern Ireland wanted. I think they wanted a great deal more. I think they wanted us to make some political progress. We have identified the difficulties, but we haven't found a way round that. Not because we didn't have the time, but because there wasn't a preparedness to compromise and I must emphasise that I believe that there are people in all the political parties who were working very hard towards an agreement. I have to say that I think an agreement was possible. I think it was there for the taking and that's one of the things (interruption). I think you are seeking to put words in my mouth. What I have said is that it was deeply disappointing at the weekend to hear John Hume delivering a speech at his party Conference where not only in terms of his analysis of the problem but in terms of the precise way in which it should be resolved, he said exactly the same thing that he said on the first day of the Talks. So that after six months of intensive negotiations, we are talking about three or four days a week sometimes, in fact, we are not any closer, indeed, some of the things that some of the delegates said at

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the SDLP Conference suggested that they were further away from the Unionists.

Interviewer: Well was this in evidence throughout those six months or did there seem to be movement which now seems to have been retracted ?

Mr. Alderdice: Well, I have not through all of this period of time said anything about what's gone on in the Conference itself. But I think, in the past, I have been very ready and prepared to criticise Unionists when I believe that they have had a part to play in intransigence or in stability in this Province. And I think it is only right then if I believe that there has been a failure to move, and a publicly demonstrated failure to move on the part of someone else, that I should similarly say so if the boot is on the other foot.

Interviewer: Is the Irish Government equally guilty in your view of refusing to budge ?

Mr. Alderdice: Well you have raised the question of the Irish Government. Not me. I mean the Irish Government is in a state of considerable confusion at the moment and has been for quite some time and perhaps it will be of value as to what new Government comes out. But what is clear is that from the publicly stated position at the end of the Talks from the SDLP there is no change from the publicly stated position at the very beginning of the Talks and that after six months, where we were supposed to converge. We should not be surprised about this. I said before these Talks started that I was very cautious indeed about the prospect because I saw the Talks as moving in a divergence situation. The SDLP wanting to build on the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Unionist wanting to dismantle the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and I think tragically what we have seen is that there has not been any convergence and I think it brings it right back to the things that I have been saying for the last three or four years, and that is,

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that I think it probably comes to the British Government to actually put down what way it believes would be right and fair for Northern Ireland to be governed, and after six months of discussions the Secretary of State and his colleagues must be even more clear than ever they were before about precisely what the positions are, precisely what the problems are, and precisely what would be the best way of governing Northern Ireland itself and in its relations with the rest of the UK and the rest of this island.

Interviewer: So you can't accuse me of putting words in your mouth . . . Are you saying that it's the SDLP's intransigence on the bodies they want to see running any new Ireland which might emerge which has led to the break-down of these Talks ?

Mr. Alderdice: Well as you know, John Hume at the weekend made very clear what his proposals were. That those were still his views and I have to say that I don't believe that the idea of a Dublin - appointed Minister governing Northern Ireland internally and an arrangement which removes any legislative power from the people who represent Northern Ireland is a way forward that's in any way acceptable to any true democrat, on the one hand, and to the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland.

Interviewer: Is there any point in resuming these Talks ?

Mr. Alderdice: Well I think this is one of the great difficulties (interruption). Jim Molyneaux was saying earlier on that he believes that there were practical things we can cooperate on and I think that's true. But that does leave aside the constitutional problem and I think that it's left hanging in the air as to whether talks will solve that one.

Interviewer: Dr. John Alderdice, leader of the Alliance Party, thank you very much indeed.