

SUBMISSION BY DR PAISLEY M.P., M.E.P.

AT

PLENARY SESSION

OF STRAND 1 TALKS

STORMONT

JUNE 1991

TEXT OF SPEECH BY DR. PAISLEY

These talks meet under a very dark and tragic shadow - the lengthening shadow of almost 3000 people killed in the past years, and the more recent shadow of the atrocity of Glenanne when three gallant members of the Ulster Defence Regiment were cruelly and brutally done to death by the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

It is with those shadows upon them that all delegates attending these talks need to face up to the hard realities. History is repeating itself. The Atkins talks also met in the wake of the killing of three UDR men.

It is a fact, however unpalatable it may be to some members of the general public or even members of the delegations around this table, that even if these talks attain political agreement, our war torn, and carnage ridden Province will not be rid of its greatest scourge - the scourge of IRA terrorism, and other terrorism resulting, nor can these talks give to the people of Ulster its greatest goal - the goal of peace. We would do well as we enter these proceedings to keep those stern truths firmly to the forefront of our minds.

No political agreement at these talks, short of the impossible, that is a surrender to the IRA's demands for a 32 County Republic, will cause the IRA to go away. I am glad, Mr. Secretary of State, that you, when you announced the calling of these talks, were prepared to face up to that fact. The IRA has not only declared that it is its purpose to destroy the democratic institutions which may come from these talks but it has also declared the same enmity and opposition to the political institutions of Government in the Irish Republic. It has vowed to destroy them as well.

It is my view, it is the view of our joint delegations, and it is the view of the overwhelming mass of the people which we represent and for whom I speak, that the IRA cannot be defeated by political measures alone. There must be a military defeat of terrorism. It behoves Her Majesty's Government and you, Secretary of State, as the representative of the Government in our Province to press ahead relentlessly on the security front with the battle against terrorism. To date the policies pursued by successive London Governments have failed. They have failed because they have been woefully inadequate. The pressing need of this grave hour is a thorough intensification of the struggle against all men of terror until every last one of them has been defeated.

I trust that no one at this Table will seek to hide behind the awful spectre of terrorism and to seek advantage for their point of view by even the suggestion that a particular political solution would defeat the IRA. The gunman is not interested in a political settlement. He is interested in armed revolution. He knows that by the ballot he can never win, so he has chosen the bullet and the bomb, destruction and violence as the weaponry for attaining his political end. The ballot box for him is only a useful strategy in his propaganda war - his Goebbel's initiative. Terrorism must be defeated. It must not be tolerated. It must be eradicated, not accommodated. There is a cry - a piercing cry which comes from the heart of stricken Ulster today right to Her Majesty's Government, "Get on with the job and show these men of blood that you really mean business and that business is their total and utter defeat."

It is a fact which needs to be put clearly on record that the majority of the Unionist population in this Province is not really convinced that Her Majesty's Government has the will to win the battle against terrorism. Until that will is demonstrated, not just in condemnatory and graphic descriptions of the IRA's atrocities but by definite action which will strike at the very heart of terrorism, the majority

If the population will not be prepared to put faith in the Government or grant to it trust and confidence. In short, "Actions speak louder than words." Why is it, people ask, that so soon after an atrocity like Glenanne, the security forces can have a successful strike? When the people see an effective security policy being pursued by the Government then and only then will the Government have the response of confidence from the people.

Because of the misleading, mischievous and even malicious slants (like that of Mr. Beattie of the Police Federation) put on the purpose of these talks, I think a cold shower of reality would be appropriate for us all.

These talks cannot and will not stop the Roman Catholic IRA nor will it stop acts of terror by those who claim the name Protestant.

This is not a peace conference - the belligerents in the terrorist conflict are not at the table. Already we have seen an upsurge of violence and if we succeed in negotiating a constitutional and political settlement that upsurge will be increased to the 'nth degree.

There will be an increasing effort to bomb us from these talks and that effort will know no bounds if we succeed. Some of my colleagues, since their names were mentioned as part of the DUP team, have been visited by the police and warned of most serious threats on their lives. Yet such colleagues of mine are labelled by Mr. Beattie as cowards.

I must say we will not be bombed either into submission nor from these talks no matter what others do. Furthermore some of the conditions on which these talks commenced have yet to be honoured by the two governments, so we will learn when the time comes whether or not that honour will be kept.

I have a solemn obligation to say what I have said and to put it clearly and unapologetically upon the record. At long last we have arrived at the first plenary of Strand One.

The Unionists have travelled a very long road to get these talks going, long before you, Mr. Chairman, had any responsibility for Northern Ireland.

A great wrong was done by the Thatcher administration to the Unionist majority in Northern Ireland by the signing of the Anglo/Irish Agreement. That Agreement set for itself the objectives of "peace, stability and reconciliation". These are entirely laudable and sensible objectives which all right-thinking people in Northern Ireland would share and endorse. Indeed the Unionist community which over the past 20 years and more has suffered most at the hands of the terrorists has most to gain from the achievement of such aims. As representatives of those who bear the brunt of terrorism we have much invested in the goals of peace and stability.

As we predicted, however, the Anglo/Irish Agreement has proved entirely incapable of delivering on its declared objectives. Indeed with the passage of time it has become more and more obvious that the Agreement itself has become a major barrier to political progress and stability and a significant spur to violence and unrest. On signing the Agreement the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, declared that she did so because of the continuing violence. The reality is that violence has since escalated as the terrorists recognised that violence can, sadly, win substantial political concessions from Government.

No one should be in any doubt that the Anglo/Irish Agreement remains as unacceptable to the vast majority of the people of Northern Ireland today as it was on the 15 November, 1985. There has been no diminution in the people's antipathy

towards an Agreement which was devised and drawn up in secrecy and deceit without any consultation whatsoever with the elected representatives of the majority population and implemented without their consent.

In the Chequers communique of November 1984 the British Government agreed that "the structures and processes" of Northern Ireland must be acceptable to both communities. The Anglo/Irish Agreement fails the test of acceptability agreed by the British Government. Every test of public opinion since November 1985 confirms the deep seated and overwhelming rejection of the Anglo/Irish Agreement. The reasons for that rejection remain as valid today as they were five and a half years ago.

Under the current arrangements the Unionist population is excluded from any role in the administration and government of the Province. Nationalists, on the other hand, through the Dublin Government are represented at the very highest echelons of the decision and policy making process. The Unionists have no voice at the Anglo/Irish Conference Table while a foreign government which lays claim to the territory of Northern Ireland and which receives not one vote from the people of Northern Ireland is given a substantial role in the day to day running of part of the United Kingdom. Article 2(b) of the Agreement requires that "determined efforts will be made through the Conference to resolve any difficulties" between the two Governments with the Republic's Government afforded the right to put forward "views and proposals" on a whole range of subjects which goes to the heart of government.

The Anglo/Irish Agreement constitutes a major and substantial diminution of the UK's sovereignty over Northern Ireland. There is no recognition of the status of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom. Unionists are denied the basic democratic rights enjoyed by their fellow citizens elsewhere in the

kingdom. And far from reassuring the people of Northern Ireland of their right to self-determination Article 1(c) of Part A of the Agreement actually does the very opposite in that the two governments are agreed that Northern Ireland can only move in one direction - into a United Ireland.

The Anglo/Irish Agreement has failed and it is time to move forward and build structures of government which afford a role for every party committed to the constitutional process. Let no one doubt our desire to live in harmony with those with whom we share this island. But the Anglo/Irish Agreement is not the way.

It is an act of outrage and betrayal and done behind a smokescreen of atrocious lies. It was an effort to railroad the majority into the hands of their traditional enemies; to neuter and muzzle them and allow them to live under the licence (to use contemporary Tory dog-jargon) of what was euphemistically called the Anglo/Irish Agreement.

From the signing of that ill-fated document Mr. Molyneaux and myself, our two parties and many others set about the task of undoing the great wrong perpetrated upon us by a wilful and headstrong woman, intoxicated with the poisoned chalice of the Foreign Office and presented to her by her final political assassin, one Geoffrey Howe.

We put our faith in the ballot box and submitted ourselves to the people. The by-election results spoke for themselves. We petitioned Her Majesty the Queen with an enormous petition and we fought the subsequent General Election on the issue. Unlike others we stuck to our manifesto which committed us to

"urgently seek to ascertain whether the new government is prepared

to create the circumstances and conditions necessary to encourage successful negotiations, including the suspension of the working of the (Anglo/Irish) Agreement and of the Maryfield Secretariat. We will naturally test and assess whether there exists a mood of reality at Westminster which could lead to an alternative to and a replacement of, the so-called Accord."

The first day of the sitting of the new Parliament we contacted the Government's Chief Whip, Mr. Wakeham, and through him we opened talks with the Government. These took place first at Westminster and then at Belfast. They were first on Civil Service level and then on Secretary of State Tom King's level.

At first there was no willingness on the part of the Government to move at all. They were in the business of attempting to buy, by the silver of patronage, support from Unionists for the dictat.

After many months with all the wining and dining at Hillsborough, no responsible Unionist could be found to break the solid front of opposition to the Iscariot scheme. Mr. King admitted that at the end Unionists all said we cannot wear the Anglo Irish Agreement.

Outside, the war against opposition to the so-called Accord, was carried on by the authorities, and the Unionists began to experience the teeth of the weapon forged against them.

Untiringly, Mr. Molyneux and myself, along with a joint Unionist Working Party, worked at the job entrusted to us by the majority of voters in the Province. This was in spite of an attempt by agents from the Northern Ireland Office to sow discord amongst brethren. Someday no doubt the inside story will be told but the

end in view was the ditching of the present leadership of the Unionist parties. We presented to Tom King a document which Mrs. Thatcher herself called "helpful" and "constructive" but which really brought an end to our negotiations.

We meant business but Tom King didn't. He never informed his Dublin partners in the Anglo/Irish Agreement what our minds were.

Yet, Mr. Chairman, though we started the talks about talks process in 1987 and submitted our own outline proposals to the then Secretary of State and Prime Minister it was not until you took office that we found someone who was prepared to *run with the ball*. It would be churlish if I was not to acknowledge and show gratitude for your dogged efforts.

There have, no doubt, been times when you have questioned your judgment - if not your sanity - in embarking upon this process (perhaps at times from another point of view we have done the same) but for our part we applaud your decision and no matter how difficult the road may be, we shall exhaust every prospect of reaching agreement before we concede that your optimism is not to be rewarded with success.

We have all lived with the divisions and difficulties of life in Northern Ireland and we each perceive its causes and nature differently, or at best with differing emphasis. Yet there are some inescapable realities that are not the subject of dispute - though admittedly we each may state them with our own qualifications. Let me list some, as I see them.

The first reality is that the overwhelming majority of the people in Northern Ireland wish to remain part of the United Kingdom. You, Mr. Chairman, during the lead-up to calling these talks were careful to ensure that all participants might

recognise this reality. When you spoke to the Bangor Chamber of Trade on 9 January, 1989 you said that the talks you envisaged should deal with what we now call "the three relationships" but you added,

"without dilution of UK sovereignty or the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom."

More specifically you said,

"Northern Ireland will not cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of a majority of the people who live here. That has been the position in British law for forty years and it is reinforced by Article One of the Anglo/Irish Agreement. Majority desire for change in the status clearly does not exist at present and seems unlikely in the foreseeable future. That is the reality which I believe all constitutional politicians in Northern Ireland in practice accept."

If your assessment of the interpretation of Article One is accurate and shared by all those who subscribe to that *accord* then the issue will not be one for debate and can, in more precise terms, be included in any agreement we reach in this process. To ensure that the parties "signing on" for these talks might be aware of this reality you returned to it, Mr. Chairman, when you spoke to the Current Affairs Society of Methodist College on 6 December, 1989. You said,

"We all have to face the facts as they are now. The central political fact is that a clear majority of the people of Northern Ireland wants to remain part of the United Kingdom. But it is also a fact that a

minority would like to see Ireland united and the border removed. How do we resolve this fundamental difference? I accept that it is fundamental. The only way the matter can be decided in a democracy is to respect the wishes of the people. Their decision by a majority, to retain the Union, is entirely clear. Northern Ireland will remain part of the UK, unless and until there is a change of mind - and I see no sign or prospect of that in the foreseeable future. I believe passionately that the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland must be upheld."

Without wishing to embarrass you, Mr. Chairman, by showing you how carefully we listen to your utterances and how much we regard at least some of them, may I allude to your speech in the House of Commons on 5 July, 1990 - the occasion which had been intended to announce the start of the actual talks process - when you returned to the subject of the status of Northern Ireland.

"Although the Constitutional question has often seemed central to matters in Northern Ireland, I turn to it now in the hope of putting it to one side. We regard the position as clear. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom in National and International law. It is part of the United Kingdom because that is the clear wish of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland. There will be no change in the status of Northern Ireland unless or until a majority of people there want it. That seems unlikely for the foreseeable future. I believe that most in this House, and I number myself among them, would wish to see the Union continue, but the principles of democracy and self-determination mean that the people of Northern Ireland must themselves be the final arbiters.

By virtue of its Constitution, the Republic of Ireland since 1937 also

claimed sovereignty over Northern Ireland. We do not accept or recognise that claim, which has no basis in our law, or equally important, in International law. That claim is, I know, seen by some in Northern Ireland, and in other parts of this country, as a major stumbling block to the development of constructive relationships. I do not regard it as helpful. Nor, however, do I believe that it should be a major preoccupation - for this reason the Republic of Ireland has accepted, through the Anglo/Irish Agreement, that the status of Northern Ireland could be changed only with the consent of a majority of its people. In short, through that binding International Treaty, it has shown that it, too, supports the right of the people of Northern Ireland to self-determination."

It hardly needs saying, but I shall say it with conviction and with strength, that even if you had not set out the parameters, within which the internal relationship should be constructed, as clearly as you have, my colleagues would, with force and vigour, have been contending that the internal structures to regulate political life in Northern Ireland should be firmly within the United Kingdom. We are not in any talks aimed at destroying Ulster's proper place in the United Kingdom. With annexation in a United Ireland we will have no truck whatsoever.

I noted that the document Mr. Hume presented to us yesterday quoted from an earlier SDLP position paper in which they too had faced this reality. The SDLP said,

"the harsh reality is that whether or not [Unionists] have the academic right to a veto on Irish unity, they have it as a matter of fact based on numbers, geography and history and they have it in the exact same way as Greek or Turkish Cypriots have a factual veto on the exercise of self-determination on the island of Cyprus."

The second reality identifies the geographical and historical relationship between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Unlike the first reality which is deemed to please only Unionists this second reality is regarded to be of interest only to Nationalists. This is not so. Historically Unionists wished to create a good neighbourly relationship with the country and people with whom they share this island. Our Unionist forefathers contended, as I do, that a sound basis should be established for friendly relationships with the South. No one would be more pleased than I, if in this generation, we could realise the objective for which Carson and Craig struggled. I have been encouraged in the past few months how many influential political figures in the Irish Republic have expressed their desire or willingness, or both, to remove one of the barriers to improving the relationship between us, namely the claim to our territory contained in Articles Two and Three of the Constitution of the Irish Republic.

The history of this Constitution is interesting. It was not brought in with the overwhelming wishes of the people of the Irish Free State. It was endorsed by general plebiscite and received without enthusiasm. 685,105 voted for and 526,945 against, giving a majority of 158,160. (In the general election which followed, DeValera's party failed to secure an absolute majority in the Dail).

The 1937 Constitution claimed to be for the whole of Ireland. Northern Ireland, if it had voted, would undoubtedly have rejected the Constitution.

In the same spirit with which these politicians have made their views known may I respond by expressing the opinion that such a move would transform the situation. It would serve to unlock the barrier for whereas it is self-evident that a close relationship is not possible with the Irish Republic while it makes a claim to our Province it is unquestionably certain that if the claim is removed then a genuine and meaningful relationship can be established. The only basis for that

must be that no part of this island has any designs on another part.

The third reality concerns the purpose of this Strand of the process. I recognise that there is a wish to examine the back-cloth of the Northern Ireland problem and an intention to dissect each cause whether real or imagined but we must get down to the business of "institution building". I am happy to listen and note carefully the wisdom from which we may learn from someone else's angle of vision. This, I know, is your view too, Mr. Chairman, for you have publicly expressed it to be so. In your Bangor speech which I referred to earlier you pointed out the democratic deficit that exists in Northern Ireland.

"Perhaps the most striking feature of the local political scene is the absence of a forum here in which local politicians can help to find solutions to the problems which face those they represent. I feel that absence keenly. But I suggest that the absence of such a forum is, or should be, most keenly felt by local politicians themselves and those whom they represent. Certainly, the discussions which I have held with politicians do suggest that there continues to be widespread support for devolution of legislative and executive powers, although some favour more limited initial steps in that direction."

In your speech at Methodist College you declared,

"I confirm, too, that we are looking, as I believe the parties are, for ways in which local representatives can be more fully involved in the government of Northern Ireland. So the Government wants to transfer power to local institutions. We want to see progress made to or towards devolution. We want to involve local people in the exercise

of power."

As political leaders of the people of Ulster, I believe we would all be failing if we did not realistically seek, at this juncture in our affairs, to obtain for the people, a meaningful say in the governing of their Province. I for one am dedicated to bring to an end, as soon as possible, the system of undemocratic colonial rule which has prevailed here far too long.

I believe that the people of Northern Ireland in general, and I affirm that the Unionist people whom we represent in particular are looking for a real change in their mode of government. They are not interested in any cosmetic exercise or in some slight tinkering with the existing frameworks. Our delegation has not come to these talks to enter into a discussion on such a proposal. We have come looking for a thorough and proper change which will return to the people of Northern Ireland a real say in its Government.

Although in this paper I am not going to enter into detailed argument, I must say that we are looking for the highest possible degree of devolution within the United Kingdom. What is more, I do not believe that in any way proper devolution would weaken the Union.

I think I must first realistically set out what these talks cannot attain. Firstly, I have already mentioned that it is my firm conviction and the firm conviction of the vast majority of the people of this Province, a conviction which has even been expressed by both the Prime Minister and yourself, Secretary of State, that these talks cannot attain the defeat of terrorism.

I think a comment made by Mr. John Hume at his Party's Conference on 26 November, 1988 is appropriate here. He said,

"The most fundamental human right is the right to life. Who in Northern Ireland takes the most human lives in a situation where there is not one single injustice that justifies the taking of human life. Let the record speak. Up till last Saturday 2,705 have died in the twenty year period of the current troubles. 31% of these were members of the security forces. 14% were members of paramilitary organisations. 55% were ordinary civilian men and women from both sections of the community, 69% of whom were from the Catholic community and 31% from the Protestant community. And who killed all those people? The statistics are devastating. 44% were killed by the Provisional IRA and 18% by their fellow travelling "republican" paramilitaries. 27% were killed by Loyalists. 10% were killed by the British Army. 2% were killed by the RUC and 0.28% by the UDR. In short people describing themselves as Irish republicans have killed 6 times as many human beings as the British army, 30 times as many as the RUC and 250 times as many as the UDR.

And wait! One of their main claims is that they are the defenders of the Catholic community. Of the 1,194 members of the Catholic community who died 46% were killed by the Loyalist paramilitaries, 37% by people describing themselves as republicans and 17% by the security forces. And in the last ten years since 1 January 1978 of the 305 members of the Catholic community who have lost their lives, 112 (37%) have been killed by people describing themselves as republicans, 105 (34%) by Loyalists and 88 (29%) by the security forces.

In the last 20 years republicans have killed more than twice as many Catholics as the security forces and in the last ten years have killed more than the Loyalists! Some defenders. And I haven't even men-

tioned their "mistakes". Was it O'Casey who said, "The gunmen are not dying for the people, the people are dying for the gunmen" ?

In the light of these figures I wonder why there is such opposition to the UDR by Dublin and the SDLP.

Secondly, these talks cannot bring back the old Stormont. Many on the Unionist side understandably might long for the pre-1972 Stormont set-up, but our delegations at this Table realise, as the representatives of the unified Unionist electorate, that this is not attainable. The Convention Report from a Convention which had an overwhelming UUUC majority did not suggest putting back the old Stormont. In fact it agreed to the abolition of the Senate altogether and to a form of Government distinctly different from the pre-1972 Stormont structures.

I am not afraid as a Unionist to admit that the old Stormont system had its faults. (What system of government hasn't?) The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party had no part in government under the Stormont system and none of my colleagues from the Ulster Unionist Party at the Table today served in any Stormont government either. So although in many ways it may be unpalatable to the majority Unionist people of this Province that we cannot press for nor attain a pre-1972 Stormont, yet realistically the Unionist population have faced up to that fact. We are not here to talk about something that is beyond our reach.

If in these talks any of the delegates are going to insist on the unattainable and not face up to reality then these talks are bound sooner or later to flounder.

In passing, I would hope that as the Unionist people have faced up to the realities re: the old Stormont structures, that others here at this Table will equally demonstrate that they can face up to the realities which puts out of court the ideal solution as far as they are concerned. The challenge to the SDLP is no greater than

the challenge already met by the Unionists.

Thirdly, these talks cannot attain the annexation of Northern Ireland by the South. On behalf of the Unionist electorate I must say in the strongest possible manner the annexation claimed by Articles Two and Three of the Republic's Constitution is not on. The Anglo/Irish Agreement machinery geared to programme the Province into such a take over is not on. Any structures that in any way would seek to take the Province in that direction, are simply not on. While I freely recognise the goals and objectives of others at these talks I must say that these talks have not as their objective to consider or enter into any decision whatsoever on ways and means to bring about a so-called United Ireland. A United Ireland cannot come out of these talks. The Secretary of State has made that crystal clear. Fourthly, what I have said about a United Ireland I must also say about that system of government which was activated by the Sunningdale Agreement. That system of government - the ill-fated Power Sharing As-Of-Right Executive, including its proposed institutionalised Council of Ireland with a country that claimed our territory - so overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate at the Westminster election of 1974 and brought to an end by the Constitutional Stoppage - cannot be brought back again. Even the British Government in Command Paper Number 7950 stated,

"The Government believes that the holding of Executive seats is not the only way for minority representatives to participate in and influence the process of Government in both the legislative and executive forms."

This policy view of the British Government was confirmed to me by the then Prime Minister herself.

No matter how unpalatable these matters may be it is best for us all at the very outset to face up to them. Instead of abortively lending our energies on useless

and fruitless discussions about the unattainable we must apply all our energies to bring about that goal - a suitable devolved form of government for Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom.

If these talks in any way try to go outside the parameters set down in the statements made inside and outside the House of Commons, by the Secretary of State, and the statements of policy confirmed by Her Majesty's Government, and get into the field of that which is clearly unattainable, then they are bound to flounder.

If, on the other hand, these talks can show to the world that Ulster people have been seriously misrepresented, that they are not unreasonable, and that they are prepared to seek with all their strength that which is clearly attainable then these talks have a good hope of success.

It is my feeling as I read the present situation in Northern Ireland that the vast majority of all sections of the community hope and pray that this touch of realism will be injected into each one of us at the Table. It is imperative that we concentrate our minds upon the attainable and so bring about the displacement of hopelessness and inject real hope into the hearts of all our people.

Every member here is aware of the air of reality which must permeate our deliberations.

I am sure that on many occasions members opposite and their constituents have been sadly disillusioned with the authorities in Dublin. We on this side have been sadly disillusioned with Westminster and with many leading politicians there. Thus, the people on both sides, including any who take an in-between position, find themselves engaged in a great rethink.

Live men, not dead men, must decide Ulster's future.

For the sake of our Province we must be honest with ourselves. I hope that as these talks continue we will face up to realities. No doubt many of us will find some things hard to swallow, but unless we face realities the destiny of the Province will be taken entirely out of our hands. If we do not do the job ourselves people whom we do not like will do it for us. That is something which should have a great influence on all of us.

I have absolutely no faith in the ability of men who occupy high positions in Stormont Castle to tackle the problems of Northern Ireland - these talks prove that they themselves admit it. In saying that, I am not attacking the integrity of the gentlemen in question. It is just that they do not have the necessary background knowledge or experience. They do not know how our problems originated, nor do they understand the mentality of Ulstermen. Ulstermen are not Englishmen living in Northern Ireland.

There has been some cross-talk about whether we are Irishmen, Ulstermen or British. I would never repudiate the fact that I am an Irishman but that to me is a geographical term in relation to the island in which I live. That does not call into question my Britishness. Others who say they are Irishmen do so because of some aspiration or something to do with nationality. Whether we regard ourselves as Irish from a nationalistic point of view or from a geographical point of view, we in Northern Ireland are in a sense a race apart.

We have the common motivation that we are all convinced that only Ulstermen can solve this problem. We on this side resent the incursion of Southern politicians into our affairs. Everybody knows that. Perhaps members opposite resent the incursion of British politicians. Some of us on this side also resent the inter-

ference of British politicians.

We have all come to the conclusion that Ulstermen can understand Ulster's problems, but can Ulstermen solve these problems? That is the challenge that faces us. I have always been hopeful for the future because I believed that eventually the elected representatives of Northern Ireland would realise that if they did not get down to reality, face unpleasant facts, and take upon themselves the responsibility of tackling and doing something about the plight of the Province the responsibility would be taken from us. We resent the imposition of a failed solution with which we did not agree.

Our loyalties are deeply inbred. They are part of our history and part of the things in which we have been brought up to believe. We are going to hold them tenaciously. Let us not blink at that fact. Could we not as Ulstermen find something above that to which we could all give our loyalty without question? Would that not be a democratic Ulster of which each of us could be justly proud? It is to this that we should set our minds. There will be knotty problems to which it will seem almost impossible to find a solution. Only by patience can these problems be tackled satisfactorily.

Northern Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom. Its status both as a part of the United Kingdom and as distinct entity within the United Kingdom is made clear by the correct name of the Kingdom that is, "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland." This status derives from the creation of the United Kingdom and as can be seen from the preamble and first article to the Act of Union of 1800 it is clear that the Kingdom rests on a Treaty entered into by two kingdoms that is, Great Britain and Ireland and on the legislation of the two parliaments which gave effect to that Treaty and created a new parliament. It should be noted that the Acts of Union declare that the two kingdoms shall be

united, and I quote, "forever". The Acts themselves did not provide any mechanism for amending the Treaty they embody or to end the Treaty which they embody. However, when the major change occurred to the United Kingdom, namely, the secession of the 26 counties of Southern Ireland this was given effect to by a Treaty made between Her Majesty's Government and a provisional Government formed by an elected parliamentary body representative of those 26 counties, which Treaty was then embodied in legislation - The Irish Free State Agreement Act of 1922.

The Acts of Union therefore were amended in a procedure similar to that by which they were enacted. Although Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom derives from the creation of the United Kingdom in 1801, Northern Ireland as a unit distinct from the rest of Ireland derives from the Government of Ireland Act 1920. It is on this vital issue that the Anglo/Irish Agreement has been weighed by the majority population and has been found wanting.

Those that argue that the status of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom is affirmed and confirmed by that Agreement until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland decide otherwise have no answer whatsoever to the question, "Why was the status of Northern Ireland not defined in the Anglo Irish Agreement?" We all know the reason why it was not defined. Because defining it would have run contrary to the 1937 Constitution of the Irish Republic and that is why there were two Agreements signed at Hillsborough and those two Agreements indicated how the respective parties wished themselves to be described and their territories to be defined. The same was true of the so-called Sunningdale Agreement.

This question cannot be swept under the carpet nor can we find any words that

will accommodate both beliefs, because both beliefs have a wide chasm between them that cannot be bridged. The majority of people in Northern Ireland demand that the status of Northern Ireland must be spelled out unequivocally in any new Agreement. The *de facto* position must be recognised as a *de jure* position as far as Northern Ireland is concerned. That is why Unionists are anxious to deal in Strand Two of the Talks with the question of territorial claim as it appears Articles Two and Three of the Irish Republic's 1937 Constitution.

Relationships within the Northern Ireland community need also to be addressed and the consideration of the establishment of a mechanism whereby grievances, whether they be perceived grievances or real grievances, can be effectively and satisfactorily dealt with. Relationships which have in their make up, religion, culture, political aspirations, and social conditions. These must all be thoroughly addressed.

The sort of institutional arrangements for and within Northern Ireland must come under consideration, debate and discussion:-

- * What sort of institution we must have at Province wide level
- * What sort of institutions we should have at the local authorities level
- * What the relationship should be between a Province-wide Assembly and local authorities
- * What other institutions we should have in regard to education, housing, health and social services and so on (For example, do we see a future for the Boards as they presently exist in Northern Ireland?)

We must ascertain from the representative of the British Government, you sir, what powers you propose would be transferred to a Province-wide Assembly? Would they be the same powers that were transferred to the first Northern Ireland Assembly? What role an Assembly would have in regard to security? How

would these institutions operate and how would they be financed? According to the Secretary of State's vision of these talks we should be agreeing and building such institutions - I share his view.

Following on from that we must discuss the relationship that these institutions within Northern Ireland would have with the Secretary of State, the UK Government and the parliamentary system at Westminster. We would especially have to look at whether there would be a role for the Secretary of State as arbiter in disputes.

Keeping in mind the fact that under the old 1920 Act arrangement there were matters entirely reserved to the United Kingdom Government and Parliament. Therefore, we need to thrash out what way we would like to have actions under those reserved matters scrutinised in the Westminster parliamentary system including the legislative procedures concerning those matters. This must also be applied to non-transferred matters.

We must also deal with:-

- * The relationship between the new institutions in Northern Ireland and the European Community
- * The way representations would be made to the Community in matters that directly affect Northern Ireland
- * Representation in matters relevant to the whole of the United Kingdom which have a strong bearing on Ulster's economy
- * The protection of the individual, the safeguarding of community rights, and the forms of redress available
- * What a Bill of Rights should consist of, and into what areas it should enter

These are but a few of the matters that we must concern ourselves with and as

you, Mr. Chairman, made it clear that there would be no barring of any matters from Strand One or Strand Two, no doubt, as we get into discussions many other issues will emerge that must be thoroughly debated and agreement sought thereon.

I think it is essential the people of Northern Ireland know that whatever the outcome may be on those matters which deal with the internal affairs of Northern Ireland they will have the opportunity to pass judgment whether they want the final package for the internal administration of Northern Ireland to be agreed, not merely by their political representatives but by themselves. The power of veto on this issue must rest with the Ulster people and with the Ulster people alone.

After all the Anglo Irish Agreement says that on the major constitutional issue of whether Northern Ireland should be put into the Republic, that only can be dealt with by a majority vote in Northern Ireland. So the matter of the administration of Northern Ireland and its Government can only be dealt with by the majority vote of the people of Northern Ireland democratically declared.

No doubt considerable expert advice may be necessary to deal with these matters satisfactorily.

Time is not on our side. As far as we are concerned on this joint Unionist delegation we were not responsible for the delay of starting Strand One. In fact the matters that kept Strand One from starting had nothing whatsoever to do with the business and agenda of Strand One. They were matters relevant to Strand Two and brought in elements that we were never even alerted to in any of our previous discussions with the Secretary of State. The first we heard of them was in the so-called *Ultimatum document*. The time lost, in all honesty and fair dealing, must be made up.

Before concluding let me return briefly to the question of security. If it is proposed by the Government to withhold from any Assembly in Northern Ireland powers in the field of law and order then let the Government recognise that if a local Assembly and Government were established in Northern Ireland then that Assembly and Government would not have the least chance of survival if it were denied influence in security policy and affairs. The primary concern of the people of Northern Ireland is, and will continue to be, the shootings and bombings in our midst. Once there is an Assembly they will look to that Assembly to alleviate the problems which beset them without distinguishing whether their grievance is a matter over which the local politicians have power or not. If the local politicians and their institutions are to survive or retain any credibility in our troubled society they must be seen to have a significant sway and role in security.

If the Secretary of State is to pursue the line he hinted at yesterday and places *constraints on the distribution of responsibility for security matters*, then I must say two things to the Government. One, you must very definitely keep the door open for the return of full law and order powers to Northern Ireland at a future date. Two, you must find a way to give a devolved Assembly a meaningful role and interest in the security field in the meantime.

We shall be seeking full law and order powers, but if you, Mr. Chairman, insist on limiting the local role in security we have proposals to meet these two needs. I trust that in such circumstances our proposals will be favourably considered by Her Majesty's Government. The door must also be kept open in regard to power over the lower courts and electoral law.

I have already spoken of the supremacy of the ballot box as the key to progress and so it must continue to be if we are to have any chance of success.

Let the people be the final arbitrators. If they approve a constitutional settlement then the political parties will be obliged to work that system and essential stability will be assured.

Mr. Chairman, the challenge to each one of us in these talks is immense. Difficult matters will have to be faced and decisions made from which it would be easier to run away. Believe me, it would have been a lot simpler and easier for us to have given up and not persisted in continuing talks which some parties at this very table prophesied were doomed to total failure.

Now as we have come together let us understand if we should succeed then the great prize of giving the Ulster people a real say in their own affairs awaits us and not only so, a real chance for their future wellbeing. It is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all, but to try and to succeed must be our aim.

If these talks fail, Mr. Chairman, it shall not be due to any lack of effort on my part or that of my colleagues. That is our pledge to you, sir, and to the people of Northern Ireland and to the others around the table.

I put it on record that I do not think that human skills and human wisdom and human ability are equal to this task. But the Holy Book tells us that if any of us lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. And it shall be given him. Such wisdom alone can extract us from the quagmire of our appalling difficulties and terrifying problems.

In another day when other great difficulties beset the freedom of mankind Winston Churchill paid this tribute to the Ulster people.

"Only one great channel of entry remained open because loyal Ulster

gave us the full use of the Northern Irish ports and waters and thus ensured the free working of the Clyde and the Mersey. But for the loyalty of Northern Ireland and its devotion to what has now become the cause of thirty governments or nations, we should have been confronted with slavery and death, and the light which now shines so strongly throughout the world would have been quenched."

If in that crisis Ulster was a torch-bearer, surely we, when we have the future of our children and our children's children to think about, should seek to light a light which shall be an example to the whole world of how problems and difficulties and great crises can be faced and overcome.

Recently I was asked what my vision was for Ulster - I replied in the words of the Old Testament Prophet Micah,

"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree and none shall make them afraid."

May we make a vital contribution in these talks to speed on that day. May Almighty God prosper our deliberations.