

RECORD OF A PLENARY MEETING HELD AT PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS ON
17 JUNE 1991

<u>Government Team</u>	<u>Alliance Party</u>	<u>UDUP</u>
Secretary of State	Dr Alderdice	Dr Paisley
Minister of State	Mr Close	Mr Robinson
PUS	Mr Neeson	Mr McCrea
Mr Fell	Mrs Bell	Mr Wilson
Mr Pilling	Mr Morrow	Mr Vitty
Mr Thomas	Mr McBride	Mr Dodds
Mr McNeill	Mr Dickson	Mr Campbell
<u>Talks Secretariat</u>	<u>SDLP</u>	<u>UUP</u>
Mr D J R Hill	Mr Hume	Mr Molyneaux
Mr Marsh	Mr Mallon	Mr Cunningham
Mr Pope	Mr McGrady	Mr Nicholson
	Dr Hendron	Mr Trimble
<u>Also present</u>	Mrs Rogers	Mr Empey
Mr Pawson	Mr Gallagher	Mr Allen
	Mr Haughey	Mr Maginnis

1. A plenary meeting of the first strand of the Talks took place in the Conference Room at Parliament Buildings between 14.36 and 15.42 hours on 17 June 1991.

2. Following the presentation of the Alliance Party's position paper, the UUP queried the suggestion that Unionists believed that the British Isles as a whole should constitute a single political entity saying that unionism did recognise the existence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as discrete political units. He then asked whether the Alliance party favoured an all embracing British/Irish Agreement to regulate relationships between the two countries. It was explained that the first point, reflected the Alliance Party's understanding of the Unionist position and would await the UUP's presentation of their position. The second point was more relevant to Strands Two and Three although it had been covered in the Alliance Party paper and a close reading would establish their position.

(NB: The Alliance Party position paper was then circulated and is at Annex 'A' to this record.)

4. Following a brief discussion on the nature of the questioning to follow presentations and the order of it, it was agreed that questions of clarification could be taken immediately while questions and comments on substance should be taken after the completion of all presentations.

5. The DUP delegation then asked a series of questions:

- a. Would the Alliance party describe their stance on the Union as "Unionist"?
- b. What was the Alliance Party's view on limits to the application of "self-determination" to the people of Northern Ireland?
- c. Was it the case that the Alliance Party wished the relationship established under the Anglo-Irish Agreement to continue?
- d. Was the form of "power-sharing" adumbrated by Mr de Klerk in the speech which had been quoted acceptable to the Alliance Party?
- e. Did the Alliance Party attach importance to the ability of a local administration to control security matters or to be able to have an input to the arrangements by which these matters were controlled? Where did the Alliance Party stand on the issue of community support for the activities of the security forces?
- f. Did the Alliance Party see a requirement for community support to any agreement that the parties might arrive at? How could such agreement be measured or expressed?

6. The Alliance Party said that the people of Northern Ireland had the right to look at and vote on alternatives to the present system of Government. While the DUP suggestion that this might result in some form of independence or exit from the United Kingdom was hypothetical it remained the case that the Alliance Party would not

set limits on the extent of "self-determination". So far as the Anglo-Irish Agreement was concerned, its content was not and its genesis had not been satisfactory. It had not been drafted on the basis of the Alliance Party's principles but had to be made to work. The failure to implement Article 4 and the lack of involvement of Northern Ireland representatives in the Anglo-Irish Conference meant that the Agreement remained flawed. So far as the quotation from President de Clerk's speech was concerned, it had referred to principles and not to structures. The Alliance Party's view on power-sharing was well set out in the Party's second founding principle. On control of the security forces, no regional government could be worthy of the name unless it had some input to security issues and to the administration of justice. He noted the Government's position and commented that the issue would be one for intense and difficult discussion at a later stage in the process. The possibility that parties might come to a different conclusion on this matter than the Government could not be ruled out. Cross-community and cross-political support for the security forces would be essential. So far as community support for any political agreement was concerned, this too was essential. The question of how best it might be measured and expressed remained, as yet, unanswered. The issue of "widespread support" could only be addressed if all parties were aware of the mechanisms to be used for measuring it.

7. The Government Team asked whether the omission of economic issues from the Alliance Party presentation implied that these were seen as of secondary importance. The Alliance Party said that they believed that the issue was one for negotiation and discussion between the various parties and had thus not sought to develop their arguments on it at this stage.

8. There then followed a discussion about the possibility of making public the contents of the various position papers. The Alliance Party said that his paper had not been published but that he could see no difficulty in so doing. The UUP and UDUP adopted similar positions in terms of their papers but the SDLP suggested that publication could lead to wider exposure to the media of the day to

day proceedings of Strand One - this should be avoided. Following discussion the Secretary of State proposed that there should be no publication of position papers until the end of the first round of presentations. Were, however, all or any part of any parties' position papers "leaked" to the media, the "wronged" party would be entitled to publish their paper in its entirety in order to set in context any selective quotation. The proposition was agreed.

9. The SDLP asked whether and when the parties could question the Government Team on economic matters, security and the financial subvention. The Secretary of State confirmed that an opportunity would be given and also confirmed that copies of his opening statement would be circulated as an annex to the "aide memoire" which recorded the pre-lunch discussion. His opening statement would not be issued to the press.

10. The delegation then broke for coffee prior to the SDLP's presentation.

TALKS SECRETARIAT

18 June 1991

Alliance Principles & Analysis