

RECORD OF A PLENARY MEETING HELD IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
ON MONDAY 24 JUNE 1991

Government Team

Secretary of State  
Minister of State  
Mr Fell

Mr Pilling  
Mr Thomas  
Mr McNeill

Alliance Party

Dr Alderdice  
Mr Close  
Mr Neeson

Mr Morrow  
Mr Dickson  
Mrs Bell  
Mr McBride

UDUP

Dr Paisley  
Mr Robinson  
Rev McCrea

Mr Campbell  
Mr McClure  
Mr Vitty

Talks Secretariat

Mr Watson

SDLP

Mr Hume  
Mr Mallon  
Mr McGrady

UUP

Mr Molyneaux  
Mr McGimpsey  
Mr Allen

Also present

Mr Pawson

Dr Hendron  
Mr Haughey  
Mr Feely  
Mrs Rodgers

A plenary meeting of Strand 1 of the Talks took place at Parliament Buildings between 10.34 and 11.45 on 24 June.

2. The Government Team opened the proceedings by referring to the previous Thursday's Renewal Debate and the various conversations which took place in the margins of that about possible measures to intensify the Talks process. Given the shortage of time which remained from the original 10-week gap, the Government Team proposed that once the plenary sessions involving the clarification of the remaining presentations were completed, a meeting of the Business Committee should be convened to take this matter of "intensification" forward. The Government Team added that they might conceivably have a word with the party leaders before the Committee met.

3. Before moving on to the substantive business, the SDLP raised a separate point. They were concerned that the serious business of the Talks process was being placed in jeopardy as a result of two presentation papers belonging to the SDLP and Alliance respectively, apparently having been released to the Press by an individual from the Unionist delegations. The SDLP

inquired as to whether anyone could have confidence in a process whereby members of it were deliberately trying to sabotage the position of others. The Alliance Party joined these exchanges stating that their document had most certainly not been formally released, yet they could also confirm that photocopied versions of each opening presentation paper had been given to a journalistic source. The Alliance Party claimed this was offensive and a matter of some seriousness for it placed other participants in some difficulty. The Government Team commented that it was indeed unfortunate that seemingly independent and unilateral action of an individual, clearly acting outside the process, should seek to instill a degree of mutual distrust in order to destabilise and undermine the process. The SDLP added that they were considerably concerned particularly if the process moved to a stage whereby negotiating papers which were tabled might also find themselves in the hands of the media simultaneously as discussions were being embarked upon. The Government Team responded acknowledging the difficulties that this presented but also hoped that if serious negotiations were entered into, this in itself might lessen the occurrence of any leaks.

4. In responding to a further related point from the UUP, the Government Team acknowledged that the Business Committee might also look at the need to accommodate the more critical business of negotiation within a smaller circle of delegates as had been previously organised under the "Atkins Conference".

5. During the SDLP's clarification of the UDUP presentation, the following main points emerged:-

- (i) the various references in the first 3 pages of the UDUP presentation paper to the "military defeat of terrorism" accurately reflected the UDUP's view that a political settlement in Northern Ireland could not defeat terrorism once and for all.

- (ii) the UDUP confirmed that the "factors" involved in a military defeat of terrorism in Northern Ireland were similar to the measures introduced in the Republic many years ago.
- (iii) the UDUP concluded that the "well being" of the people of Northern Ireland would be helped by a political settlement but this in itself would not end the violence and there were, in addition, several other socio-economic factors which would also go some way to improving the Province's "well being".
- (iv) Paragraph 77. The UDUP confirmed that in a future session they would be tabling proposals concerning the introduction of a Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland.
- (v) The UDUP confirmed that they did not accept the "reality" that there were two sets of legitimate "rights" within the community in Northern Ireland which required equal treatment.
- (vi) In defining the word "reality" the UDUP stated that Northern Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom for a considerable time yet.
- (vii) The UDUP confirmed that it was their view that Unionists owed their loyalty to the laws of the land under the Queen as Head of State and not to the Prime Minister, the Government, or Parliament at Westminster.
- (viii) Paragraph 21. "Every party" in this context referred to those constitutional parties in a new devolved Assembly and this therefore did not include the Republic's Government.

- (ix) Paragraph 46. The UDUP stated that they would, at a future session, be tabling "imaginative proposals" for devolution of powers.

TALKS SECRETARIAT