

SUMMARY RECORD OF A PLENARY MEETING HELD IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
ON THE AFTERNOON OF 1 JULY 1992

<u>Government Team</u>	<u>Alliance Party</u>	<u>UDUP</u>
Secretary of State	Dr Alderdice	Dr Paisley
Mr Hanley	Mr Close	Mr Robinson
PUS	Mr Morrow	Mr Vitty
Mr Fell		
	Mr Dickson	Mr Dodds
Mr Thomas	Mrs Bell	Mr Campbell
Mr Maccabe	Dr McGarry	Mr Wilson
Mr D J R Hill	Mr Jones	Mr Gibson
<u>Talks Secretariat</u>	<u>SDLP</u>	<u>UUP</u>
Mr Brooker	Mr Hume	Mr Cunningham
Mr Smith	Dr Hendron	Mr Empey
	Mr Haughey	Mr Maginnis
<u>Also Present</u>		
	Mr Farren	Dr McGimpsey
	Mrs Rodgers	Mr Allen
Mr Fittall	Mr Gallagher	Mr Donaldson
Mr Smyth	Mr Maginness	Mrs Bradford
Mrs Pyper		
Mr Beeton		

The meeting began at 4.56pm and concluded at 5.24pm.

2. The Government Team reported that the Business Committee had met and produced a draft press release. A draft note of the earlier plenary had also been circulated. The Government Team explained that paragraph 6 of the Secretary of State's statement, circulated with the draft minute of the earlier plenary, was inaccurate and offered a correction. This was noted. The final text of that statement is attached.

3. The UDUP delegation sought clarification on the Secretary of State's statement. They noted that, in paragraph 5, HMG would be willing to facilitate the implementation of the institutional arrangements outlined in the sub-Committee report of 10 June, including those aspects not at present universally agreed, if, but only if, they came in the light of further exchanges in the Talks, whether in Strand I or in other strands, to attract the support of all four parties. They queried whether the Government undertakings

in the first sentence of paragraph 6 in relation to the sub-Committee report also applied to those aspects of the report not at present universally agreed. The Government Team confirmed that that was the case.

4. The UDUP delegation noted that paragraph 7 of the Secretary of State's statement referred to the belief that it was in everyone's interest that the Talks process as a whole should achieve an unambiguous consensus on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland. They queried what precisely was meant by the word "consensus". If there was an expectation that there would be universal agreement this would be unattainable because there would be a group of people who would never accept Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

5. In response, the Government Team said that it was not unreasonable to suppose that it should be possible to reach agreement on an unambiguous expression of Northern Ireland's status as an integral part of the United Kingdom given the general acceptance that Northern Ireland's status could not change without the consent of a majority of the people who lived there.

6. In response to a question from the UDUP delegation, the Government Team confirmed that references to the sub-Committee report in the Secretary of State's statement included references to the supplementary report produced on 16 June.

7. The Government Team reported that the Business Committee had produced a draft press release. This was read out and amendments were agreed in discussion. The final text is attached.

8. The SDLP delegation referred to the way that, over the weekend, there had been a substantial departure by some of the delegations from the confidentiality rule. In discussion, the UDUP delegation commented that if the Irish Government made comments about the Talks, it was entitled to reply. It was noted that as the Talks moved into the remaining strands, the Irish Government would be bound by the confidentiality rule.

9. In concluding the meeting, the Government Team expressed its deep appreciation for the way that the delegations had approached their difficult task in Strand I. In response, the delegations expressed their appreciation of the efforts of the Government Team and of all those who had serviced the delegates during the talks so far.

10. It was agreed that Sir Ninian Stephen and the Irish Government should be given copies of all the papers that had been "banked" or agreed in Sub-Committee and noted by plenary in Strand I in order to assist them in the Strand II deliberations. It was agreed that the Government Team would notify the parties as to which papers had been passed over.

11. In response to a question from the UDUP delegation, the Government Team ventured the view that Sir Ninian Stephen might be in a position to call the first meeting in Strand II as early as next Monday 6 July.

Talks Secretariat

SECRETARY OF STATE'S STATEMENT TO PLENARY, 1 JULY 1992

1. When we last met around this table, on 12 June, I was able to make a statement which described the widespread agreement which existed on what the next steps in the talks process should be. There were three elements;

- first, that the Strand 1 Sub-Committee should be invited to continue its work, concentrating in particular on the points listed in paragraph 8 of the Sub-Committee report of 10 June. A supplementary report was duly produced by the evening of 16 June for which I believe the Sub-Committee deserves our thanks. I trust we can now formally take note of it.

- Second, that Sir Ninian Stephen should be invited to convene a meeting the following week to which he would invite representatives of the two Governments and of the four Northern Ireland political parties participating in the talks to discuss a possible agenda for Strand 2 of the talks. That meeting was duly held on 19 June and completed consideration of a possible agenda for Strand 2. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Sir Ninian for the way in which he chaired that meeting, and the possible agenda which it produced - while it has yet to be ratified - has helped to illustrate the pattern of discussion which might be expected in Strand 2.

- Third, that the two Governments should hold a meeting in Strand 3 formation which observers from each of the parties would be invited to attend for at least part of the time, to give preliminary consideration to the issues likely to arise in that strand. That meeting took place yesterday. The two Governments give preliminary consideration to the issues, took careful note of the views of each of the parties and agreed a framework for substantive discussion in Strand 3, including an agenda.

2. We have agreed a number of Common Themes and a set of Common Principles which all agree should be the criteria against which any proposed arrangements should be judged. We also agreed a number of statements relevant to the need to protect, respect and express the identities of those from each of the main traditions within the community in Northern Ireland. A certain measure of agreement on new political institutions was recorded in the Sub-Committee report of 13 May. A number of other important principles were acknowledged in the further Sub-Committee report noted by plenary on 1 June. The Possible Outline Framework for new political institutions in Northern Ireland which was first considered by plenary on 3 June indicated a wider and higher level of provisional and conditional agreement. The Sub-Committee report of 10 June further expanded the amount of common ground, clearly identified the areas of disagreement and reached a measure of agreement on a range of other matters, especially the future relationship between any new political institutions in Northern Ireland and the Westminster Parliament. That was supplemented, as I have mentioned, by the further Sub-Committee report of 16 June.

3. It is clear we are not collectively able to move towards a greater degree of consensus on new political institutions for Northern Ireland at this stage. It is, however, my judgement that developments in the other strands of the talks would enable one party or another to shift its position and enable further progress towards full agreement on arrangements for the government of Northern Ireland.

4. Against that background, it may be helpful if I say something about the attitude of Her Majesty's Government to the Strand I sub-Committee report, consistently with what the Permanent Secretary, Mr Chilcot, said during the meeting to discuss a possible agenda for Strand II, on 19 June.

5. HMG, for its part, would be willing to facilitate the implementation of the institutional arrangements outlined in the sub-Committee report of 10 June, including those aspects not at present universally agreed, if, but only if, they came in the light of further exchanges in the Talks, whether in Strand I or in other strands, to attract the support of all four parties.

6. As to the basis for entering Strand II, I can say on behalf of the Government that unless and until the four parties agree on a different approach, we take the view that discussions in Strand II are likely to take place on the premise that any new political institutions in Northern Ireland would be based on the structures outlined in the sub-Committee report. The Government is ready to enter and participate in discussions in Strand II on that basis, not having at this stage a basis in any of the proposals in the form originally submitted by any of the parties in Strand I because none of those can be regarded as having sufficient general support.

7. There is one particular point of concern to some around this table, on which I should speak. I do not wish to go further than saying that I believe it is in everyone's interest that the Talks process as a whole should achieve an unambiguous consensus on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland and produce a framework for relationships which will be genuinely acceptable to all the Talks participants and to the people. That may have implications for Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution. That there are now different views on whether a consensus is to be found is both undeniable and unsurprising; it is why we need to talk. But I do not believe such a consensus to be beyond our grasp, and I shall argue for it.

8. I have now reflected on the position which has been reached in the Talks and on the points made to me by the party leaders [and other delegates]. My conclusion is that there is no more work that can usefully be done in Strand I at present, though in due course there certainly will be, and that the most constructive route forward is to build on the work done in the preparatory meetings for Strands II and III and to move forward now into those strands of discussion. I therefore now formally propose that the later strands of discussion should be launched. I do so with the agreement of each of the party leaders.

9. I will communicate the fact that I have made this proposal to the Irish Government and to Sir Ninian Stephen whose responsibility it now is to convene the opening meeting in Strand II.

TALKS STATEMENT

STATEMENT MADE OF A PRESS CONFERENCE HELD IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
ON THE AFTERNOON OF 1 JULY 1992

The Secretary of State and Mr Hanley held a number of meetings with the party leaders.

There was a plenary meeting in the afternoon. The Secretary of State announced that, after consultation, he was formally proposing the launch of the later strands of the talks.

In the light of points made by the Secretary of State during consultation and in plenary, the party leaders indicated that they accepted the proposal.

It is understood that the Irish Government has also accepted the proposal.

The Secretary of State is informing Sir Ninian Stephen, to whom the convening of the opening meeting of Strand 2 now falls.

The meeting began at 4.15pm and concluded at 5.25pm.

1. The Government has reported that the Business Committee has met and produced a draft press release. A draft note of the meeting has also been circulated. The Government has explained that paragraph 2 of the Secretary of State's statement, circulated with the draft minutes of the earlier plenary, was inaccurate and offered a correction. This was noted. The final text of that statement is attached.

2. The DUP delegation sought clarification on the Secretary of State's statement. They noted that, in paragraph 2, DUP would be willing to facilitate the implementation of the institutional arrangements outlined in the 1st-Committee report of 19 June, including those aspects not at present universally agreed, if, and only if, they saw in the light of further exchanges in the Talks, whether in Strand 1 or in other strands, the prospect of support of all four parties. They queried whether the Government undertakings