

I N C O N F I D E N C E

RECORD OF PLENARY SESSION AT PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS ON 19 JUNE

<u>Government Team</u>	<u>Alliance Party</u>	<u>SDLP</u>
Secretary of State	Dr Alderdice	Mr Hume
Minister of State	Mr Close	Mr Mallon
PUS	Mr Neeson	Mr McGrady
Mr Fell	Mrs Bell	Mr Farren
Mr Pilling	Mr Morrow	Mr Haughey
Mr Thomas	Mr Dickson	Mr Gallagher
Mr McNeill	Mr McBride	Mr Feeley
<u>Talks Secretariat</u>	<u>UUP</u>	<u>DUP</u>
Mr D J R Hill	Mr Molyneaux	Dr Paisley
Mr Hallett	Mr Nicholson	Mr Robinson
	Mr Cunningham	Mr McVeigh
<u>Others present</u>		
Mr Pawson	Mr McGimpsey	Mr Campbell
	Mr Empey	Mr Vitty
	Mr Donaldson	Mr Dodds
	Mr Allen	Mr Gibson

The meeting began at 11.47 and concluded at 12.45. The Government Team invited the SDLP to put their questions regarding the UUP's document.

2. On paragraph 1 the SDLP asked for clarification of the reference to "the process which brought us all here". The UUP replied that this related to the initiative which they had taken after the 1987 election to open discussions with the United Kingdom Government.

3. On paragraph 2, the SDLP asked whether the reference to the "joint manifesto" indicated that the DUP and the UUP papers were aspects of a joint approach and whether each party endorsed the other's paper. The UUP replied that the papers reflected a joint approach but were intended to be complementary and not identical.

4. The SDLP asked whether the Unionists saw any distinction between the terms "Unionism" and "Britishness". The UUP replied there was no distinction.

5. The SDLP asked what was meant by the reference to "a mood of realism at Westminster" in paragraph 2. The UUP replied that this

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reflected the growing recognition at Westminster that the Anglo Irish Agreement had failed and had to be replaced.

6. The SDLP asked whether the UUP document envisaged administrative or legislative devolution. The UUP replied that both were envisaged.

7. On paragraph 4, the SDLP asked what was envisaged by the expansion of the Anglo Irish Agreement into a wider British Irish agreement and how this related to the problems being addressed in strand one. The UUP replied that the objective was an agreement which would enable effective co-operation between the two sovereign nations, covering such matters as co-operation in the United Nations and the EC as well as practical issues such as the Irish community in Britain. The achievement of a satisfactory level of co-operation in this way would have beneficial effects on relations between the two communities in Northern Ireland.

8. With regard to the reference to Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution in paragraph 6, the SDLP commented that these should be interpreted together with Article 29, which obliged the Government of the Republic of Ireland to resolve international disputes by peaceful means. The UUP replied that the Articles were nevertheless used as justification by those who sought to achieve unity by violence. Article 29, in any case, related to international disputes, and the Irish Constitution did not regard Northern Ireland as an international dispute.

9. The SDLP sought confirmation that the UUP also sought amendment of the Preamble, as suggested in paragraph 6 of their paper. The UUP confirmed that this was the case.

10. The SDLP asked whether the UUP envisaged that the amendment of Articles 2 and 3 would have any effect on the level of violence. The UUP replied that they had no such expectation but nevertheless considered that amendment of Articles 2 and 3 would remove a propoganda weapon from those who sought to justify the use of violence. It would also have a beneficial effect in creating an atmosphere of trust between constitutional politicians.

11. The SDLP asked whether the UUP really regarded Northern Ireland as being "as British as Finchley", as suggested in paragraph 10, and what implications this had for devolution. The UUP replied that in constitutional terms Northern Ireland was as much a part of the UK as Finchley but this did not mean that it had to be governed in precisely the same way.

12. The SDLP asked for clarification of the phrase "Queen in Parliament" in paragraph 11. Did this mean that the Unionists saw a distinction between the Queen and Parliament? The UUP replied that "Queen in Parliament" was constitutionally the correct definition. They owed their loyalty to the Queen but this did not necessarily mean that they agreed with the policies of the Government of the day. They accepted however that it was the duty of the people of Northern Ireland to accept decisions democratically adopted by the United Kingdom Parliament.

13. The SDLP asked whether the Unionists accepted that in some cases it was necessary to handle legislation for Northern Ireland differently from that for the rest of the United Kingdom. The UUP agreed that this was necessary because the structures in many areas had grown up differently from those in the rest of the UK. If devolution were achieved, many such matters would be dealt with in Northern Ireland itself.

14. The SDLP asked what was meant by the right of self determination referred to in paragraph 14. The UUP replied that this related to the right of the people of Northern Ireland to determine their own future, through the ballot box. The position in Article 1 of the Anglo Irish Agreement was not the right approach because it provided for only one option. The SDLP asked why Unionists did not accept that the principle of self-determination should have been applied to the whole of the island of Ireland before 1920. The UUP replied that it was clear in 1920 that the great majority of people in what became Northern Ireland did not wish to leave the United Kingdom. Where there was such a clearly identifiable group, it should have the right of self-determination.

15. The SDLP asked what was meant by the reference to "unfettered

majority rule" in paragraph 17. The UUP replied that Unionists had recognised as early as the 1975 Convention that there could be no return to the old Stormont regime. They had accepted then the principle that there had to be restrictions on the exercise of majority rule and had retained that position subsequently. They accepted that the application of British democracy in its pure form was not appropriate for Northern Ireland.

16. The SDLP asked whether the quotation from Article 25 of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights mentioned in paragraph 18 meant that Unionists accepted the principle of equality of access to the public service, including in the area of local government. The UUP confirmed that this was the case.

17. The session broke for lunch at 12.45.

TALKS SECRETARIAT