

Statement
by
Dr Ian Paisley
UDUP position
9 September 1992

No delegation to this Talks process could be unaware of the **importance** my delegation attaches to the issue of addressing the territorial claim to Northern Ireland contained in the Constitution of the Irish Republic. In my opening address in Strand 1 I raised this issue; in my opening remarks in Strand 2 I spoke on this matter, at length, and in the opening Strand 3 formation meeting I underlined the importance to us of removing this obstacle. In verbal and written submissions and in questions and answers throughout this process my delegation have emphasised the importance of dealing with this key factor. This is not a new matter raised without warning - it was well heralded in advance.

Nor, Mr Chairman, could any delegation be unaware of the **priority** which my delegation sought to give to this agenda item. In our submissions at every stage we have insisted that the removal of "the territorial claim" would free unionists to contemplate arrangements with the Irish Republic that in present circumstances they could not negotiate. While other delegations may not agree with the sequence we contemplated no delegation could be surprised at the view we expressed when discussion took place on Thursday last relating to the order in which the Committee might address each Agenda item.

Our view then, as now, was to address this constitutional issue first. In the initial paper compiled by the Chairman Articles 2 & 3 were the first item. The Chairman explained that this was

because it was the issue delegations had raised more than any other in their submission to him of obstacles to a new relationship. However, the Chairman's document was not adopted because the Irish Republic's delegation complained that an issue they had raised in their submission should have been given equal priority. [This was in spite of the irony that the Republic had only placed this issue as the third item on its own list.]

We, like every other delegation took part in a discussion as to how the committee might resolve this issue. Yet when the Chairman later produced another paper suggesting an Agenda that my delegation found unacceptable there was no-one interested in resolving the difference. This time the Irish Republic sought to bulldoze the issue through by vote. We recognise that every other delegation voted in support of the Dublin delegation's proposal and expressed itself satisfied with this agenda which puts the Republic's territorial claim as **the last item** to be addressed. We remain opposed to this order of business and convinced that progress cannot be made on other matters in advance of an expression of willingness on the part of the Irish Republic's delegation to sponsor and support in the Dail and in the Republic legislation to amend their constitution.

We restate our consternation at the turn of events that has for the first time in the whole of the Talks process introduced voting as a means of deciding issues. We had thought, wrongly, it would seem, that we were engaged in a process of resolving disputes. Never before during any Strand in this process has voting formed part of the procedure.

We find ourselves in the position that until the Committee reaches what we see to be the key issue we are unable to play a full part in the proceedings. To this extent we are in a position not unlike that which the SDLP explained to Strand 1 delegates earlier this year. Like them we shall reserve our

position. As evidence of our "non-negotiating" mode Mr Robinson and I, as the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party negotiators, shall withdraw until the committee is realistically addressing the "*territorial claim*". We **shall**, however, retain a non-negotiating presence at the committee meetings here, in Stormont, to keep ourselves apprised of developments. Our delegates will not enter into any negotiations but will reserve the right to speak if appropriate. My delegation and I are willing to meet with the Chairman at any time if he feels it might be helpful.

We regret that no attempt was made to accommodate our position.