

# ULSTER DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY

## PRESS RELEASE

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The Ulster Democratic Unionist Party believes that benefits have accrued from the Talks. However we regret that the SDLP were unable to move during the whole process from their unrealistic and wholly unacceptable proposals for a Dublin presence in the internal government of Northern Ireland. Moreover the refusal of the Dublin government to demonstrate their publicly promised "generosity" during discussions on the Irish Republic's territorial claim to Northern Ireland, blocked the road to progress.

The Talks process was initiated by the two Unionist Leaders for the purpose of seeking an alternative to and a replacement of the Anglo/Irish Agreement, the restoration of democratic institutions of government for Northern Ireland and the removal of Articles 2 & 3 of the Irish Republic's Constitution.

Strand 1 was to discuss a framework for the internal government of Northern Ireland, and as such the Irish Republic's Government was excluded from the deliberations.

In the Strand 1 discussions all the parties with the exception of the SDLP agreed to a report which outlined a democratic, fair, reasonable and accountable system of government for Northern Ireland; which provided a role for all constitutional parties in proportion to their strength in the Assembly but was not executive power-sharing. Throughout the process the SDLP has continued to

HMG, however, made it clear that it was prepared to support and implement these proposals.[Subject to overall agreement.]

It was in the light of this and further endorsement by HMG of the Strand 1 proposals that we were prepared to move to Strand 2 of the process.

This was the first time in recent memory that a British Government indicated that it was prepared to implement a system of government for Northern Ireland which did not include executive power-sharing.

Strand 2 was to discuss the relationship between any new administration in Northern Ireland and the Government of the Irish Republic. For us the fundamental prerequisite to the development of good neighbourly relations between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic was, and remains, the removal of Dublin's immoral, criminal and illegal claim over the territory of this part of the United Kingdom. The DUP steadfastly sought the removal of that claim throughout the Strand 2 process and at the Strand 3 formation meeting. Right to the very end of the process, however, the Irish Republic's Government, far from being prepared to consider removing the offensive claim, sought, with the encouragement and connivance of the SDLP, to defend, justify and condone it.

We could not justify being a party to negotiations on possible arrangements for co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic while the Dublin Government refused to contemplate the slightest movement in the direction of removing the barrier to such co-operation. It would have been foolhardy and dangerous for us to have revealed our position while the Irish Government and the SDLP were not prepared to move even one iota in our direction. Nor were we prepared to engage in public relations stunts such as travelling to Dublin which, as has been proved, accomplished nothing. Our overriding concern was to do business for Ulster.

Furthermore we are not prepared under any circumstances to consider a North/South body with executive powers. Such a body would be seen, and rightly so, as an embryonic united Ireland



government. For us the removal of the territorial claim remained the fundamental objective of our participation in Strand 2 and we never wavered in that resolve.

Now that the two governments have brought the Talks to an end the DUP will consult, internally, about the most appropriate means by which we might attain our firmly held objectives. We have already analysed the areas in which the Talks, now concluded, faced difficulties and the obstacles that existed which thwarted efforts to make progress. It seems to us, and we will seek the views of our party colleagues, that no further talks could hope to succeed unless we were thoroughly satisfied that the government of the Irish Republic was genuinely prepared to sponsor legislation in the Dail for a referendum to remove the territorial claim and seek its endorsement in the Republic.