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PRESS RELEASE

13 December 1995

The Secretary of State, Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP, accompanied by Michael Ancram MP, the Minister of State with responsibility for political affairs, today met a delegation from the Alliance Party led by Dr John Alderdice. Dr Alderdice was accompanied by Seamus Close, Sean Neeson, Stephen McBride and Mrs Eileen Bell.

This was the first meeting between the Government and the Alliance Party in the groundwork talks, following the launch of the Twin Track strategy by the British and Irish Governments on 28 November. Discussion focused on the issues to be addressed in the groundwork talks, including the format and structure of future all-party negotiations held as part of an interlocking three stranded process. The Alliance Party also advanced their ideas for an elected convention.

It was agreed that there would be a series of such meetings to sustain progress towards the target date for all-party talks of the end of February 1996.

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