

ALD2/2/6/10/1/302



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
WHITEHALL  
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

Councillor Dr John Alderdice  
88 University Street  
BELFAST  
BT7 1HE

4 June 1996

*John Alderdice*

Under the terms of section 2 of the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1996 I am writing to you as the nominating representative of a party which has been successful in the elections, to invite you to nominate a team to participate in the negotiations beginning next Monday.

The negotiating team must under the Act be composed of delegates returned at the elections. There is no limit to the number of delegates who may be included. The Ground Rules for the negotiations agreed by the two governments would however generally limit a party's team for any one meeting to three (with a further three people, who need not be elected, in support if they wish).

We need to make arrangements with all speed. It would be helpful if your nomination could be passed to me as quickly as possible, and in any event no later than 6 June, via the head of our Talks Administration Unit, Mr Peter Dickinson. His telephone number is 01232 522128 and his fax number 01232 522119.



It would be convenient also if Mr Dickinson could be notified as soon as possible after you receive this letter of the name of a person with whom he should be in contact (a colleague, or indeed yourself if you wish) over initial administrative arrangements for the negotiations.

I am enclosing for your information a copy of a response I propose to give tomorrow to a parliamentary question about nominations to the negotiations.

I also enclose a note about the allowances which the two Governments intend to pay to delegates, in respect of the meetings in the relevant strands.

We shall be in touch further about arrangements for the negotiations.

I believe we are embarking on a process of dialogue with great potential to improve the lives and prospects of the people of Northern Ireland, and of everyone in these two islands. I look forward very much to your contribution.

*James  
Arthur*

**PQ REPLY**

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will make a statement about nominations to the forthcoming political negotiations, and about progress in setting up the forum established by the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1996.

**SIR PATRICK MAYHEW**

I have issued invitations to nominate teams to participate in the negotiations, under section 2(2) of the Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Act 1996, to the nominating representatives of the following parties:

Alliance Party

Democratic Unionist Party - DUP

Labour

Northern Ireland Women's Coalition

Progressive Unionist Party (PUP)

Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)

UK Unionist Party - Robert McCartney

Ulster Democratic Party (UDP)

Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)

I am required by section 2(3) of the Act to refrain from inviting nominations in respect of any party if I consider that requirements set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Ground Rules for substantive all-party negotiations (published as command paper 3232) are not met in relation to it. Paragraph 9 of the Ground Rules makes clear the

agreement of the British and Irish governments that the participation of Sinn Fein in the negotiations requires the unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire of August 1994.

After consultation with the Irish Government, both Governments are agreed that this requirement is not met and that for so long as it is not met, no invitation can be issued in respect of Sinn Fein.

Letters have also been sent to the nominating representatives of all parties returned at the elections, including Sinn Fein, about arrangements for the forum. With them is a draft of initial rules of procedure, on which we seek comment. The letters also deal with the location of the forum: we have now identified suitable premises for it at the Interpoint Centre in Belfast. I am placing a copy of these letters in the Library of the House.

**ALLOWANCES FOR DELEGATES AND PARTIES**

As indicated in Michael Ancram's letter of 18 April, it is intended to pay the following allowances to individuals:

Loss of earnings

a loss of earnings allowance at a daily rate of £100, and £50 for less than 4 hours will be payable to elected delegates only, on the basis of relevant attendance for the purposes of the negotiations. This can be claimed in arrears.

Substantive/travel expenses

delegations (and party support staff) will be able to claim subsistence and travel expenses at the standard Civil Service rates.

In addition, it is intended to pay the following to parties:

Party Allowance

a flat rate party allowance of £300 (or such lesser figure as may be agreed in the Business Committee) for each day in which the party concerned is involved in negotiations.

Party Research Grants

a party research grant in respect of vouched expenditure on relevant items of work, up to a maximum of £6,000 per quarter.