

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF AN INTER-PARTY CONFERENCE

ALLIANCE PARTY PROPOSALS (1990)

1. Such a Conference, in so far as it involves discussions between NI parties and with HMG, should be held at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, probably using the Senate Chamber. This would not only be an accessible and secure site but its symbolic significance is very considerable.

2. Discussions with parties outside of the United Kingdom will clearly be necessary. While individual parties may choose to make whatever individual contacts they wish, in so far as formal discussions connected with the conference are concerned, these should involve the whole Conference in the form of a delegation of representatives of ALL the parties. With regard to discussions with the Government of the Republic of Ireland, it is not appropriate for these to be held in Belfast nor in Dublin. London would appear to us to be a suitable location.

3. Each Party to a conference should have its own room(s) with telephone and access to word-processing, photocopying and fax facilities on site. Accommodation may also be required for support staff.

4. It is best if party delegations are the same size, but in any case Alliance would wish to have a delegation as follows:

SIX members in the conference room. THREE to be at the table at any one time, but the others being in the conference room, away from the table. Given the likelihood that such a conference may continue with some intensity and for some time, we would wish to nominate two substitutes in case of sickness or other enforced absences among the six. We would also want a further delegation member to be present at all times solely for the purpose of note-keeping. Again we would also nominate a substitute, so that this secretarial facility would always be available.

This would mean a full delegation of TEN. (Three at the table, three with access to the conference room, two substitutes, and two secretarial, only one being present at any time.)

We would also wish to use the accommodation provided for the party for consultations prior to, and after sessions, and would wish the facility to call in additional advisors for private discussions, probably on a regular basis. The names of such additional advisors would be supplied, for security.

5. In view of the considerable commitment of time that may be required of those who are actively involved in negotiations we

would require that financial recompense be available for each member of the full delegation, on those days when they are actually required and present.

In respect of meetings in London for discussions, as in item 2, we would require travel and subsistence expenses for the Alliance delegate(s).

6. Given the context of such a conference, security for those taking part should be reviewed in conjunction with the RUC. This item is also relevant in the choice of venue.

7. We think it best that such a conference proceeds on an energetic and intensive basis, however this cannot mean five days per week. When there is some agreement on the question of numbers on delegations specific proposals would be made on times and frequency.

8. Although it is not without considerable difficulty, given the range of functions which he would have to fulfil, we are sympathetic to the view that the meetings should be chaired by the Secretary of State. We would however wish to discuss the implications of such an arrangement.

9. A verbatim account of proceedings is not necessary, and may well be unhelpful. There is however a need for a daily summary, and indeed possibly a weekly summary. This should be prepared by the secretariat which is servicing the conference and should be agreed at the commencement of each new session.

10. The public information which is provided on the proceedings of a conference is matter of some sensitivity, and great importance. The approach of the parties on this should be an agreed one. At this stage we think that a brief, agreed, end-of-day press statement may be useful.

We would therefore propose that meetings should take place for three days each week. This could be either Monday through Wednesday or Monday, Wednesday, Friday. We would suggest times of 10.00 - 12.30, and 2.00 - 5.30, with the possibility of continuing on into the evening should this be agreed by the participants.

OR We propose meetings on four half days each week, Monday to Thursday, from 2.30pm to 5.30pm each day, with the facility to continue on into the evening if agreed amongst the participants.

Situation of MP's and MEP's on absences.

When does Dublin come into things.

What happens if there is an agreement amongst the four parties, but disagreement with HMG, what is the position for the chairman?

Will the Chairman be relaying the information about the confidential proceedings of the conference to Dublin all the time? Is this a problem?

DUBLIN INVOLVEMENT

Will there be two conferences or one to which Dublin will be invited. Will Belfast go to Dublin or will Dublin go to Belfast, (and where) or will both go to London or elsewhere? The whole issue to some extent makes our old agenda out-of-date.

We should discuss at the meeting the outline of the Agenda. Our old proposals are relevant but dated. They should be updated and discussed with the SOS.

The statement from SOS, when will it be and how are things going given the recent 'hiccup'?

*** When do things get under way. This is a matter of importance since some of us have considerable amounts of arranging to do in order to clear space well in advance for this? ***