

RECORD OF A BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT TEAM AND  
THE ALLIANCE PARTY, HELD IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS ON TUESDAY  
28 MAY 1991

Government Team

Secretary of State  
Minister of State  
PUS  
Mr Fell  
Mr Pilling  
Mr Thomas  
Mr McNeill

Alliance Party

Dr Alderdice  
Mr Close  
Mr Neeson

Talks Secretariat

Mr Marsh

In attendance

Mr Pawson

The meeting began at 12.35 and finished at 1.10 pm. It had before it the document entitled "Procedural Guidelines for the Conduct of Strand Two" dated 28 May 1991 and sent to the parties by the Secretary of State.

2. The Alliance Party were generally content with the document. In discussion, the following main points were made:-

Paragraphs 4 and 5. It was noted that stand-ins would be acceptable for meetings of the Steering Group and the Business Committee, that membership of each body need not necessarily be the same and that the Business Committee could meet on days other than those on which talks were taking place.

Paragraph 11. It was noted that the phrase "other working formations" was designed to cover derivatives of the type of group organised the previous week by the Minister of State in a different context. Maximum flexibility was envisaged.

Paragraph 12. The Alliance Party felt that the facility needed to be used with some care. It was noted that a record of such a meeting would be available only to the participating delegation, but the fact that a meeting had taken place would be known to all. The Alliance Party asked for more time to consider whether bilaterals between delegations should be notified to the Chairman; they did however regard the principle as sensible.

Paragraph 15. It was noted that any lack of agreement on the record of any meeting would be resolved by the Chairman; if necessary any remaining dispute could be recorded in the record of the subsequent meeting.

3. The following points were also noted in further discussion of the document:-

- (i) the decision to move the second strand from London to Belfast and then to Dublin would be taken by the Chairman under the terms of paragraph 9 and within the constraints of the 14 May document;
- (ii) the staffing for the second strand still had to be resolved and there were differing views about whether this would best be done by the Chairman himself or by the participants before the Chairman had been appointed; and
- (iii) there was no great issue of principle about which parts of the document were guidelines and which parts were standing orders.

4. The Government Team reported that a single nomination for Chairman would be submitted to the parties by the British and Irish Governments. If it were not possible to make progress on this within a short time, there might be a need to suspend the process, although that would be unfortunate.