

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZDr John Alderdice
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland17th May 1991*Dear Dr Alderdice,*

The Secretary of State has now received from the two Unionist leaders the enclosed statement which records their understanding of the position reached at their meeting with the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State on Wednesday 15 May.

It was sent to the Secretary of State at his request. It is not a report which we endorse.

When you meet the Secretary of State he will give you his own account of what the Prime Minister and he said on 15 May at the meeting with the Unionist leaders.

I understand that your office has agreed that 10.30am on Monday morning in the Secretary of State's room in Parliament Buildings would be convenient for you to meet him to discuss what the next steps might be. It is clear to the Secretary of State that we are not in a position to begin plenary discussions on Monday. I will also be advising the other parties to this effect.

*Yours sincerely,
Tony Pawson*

A J D PAWSON

To The Secretary Of State For Northern Ireland

Mr. Peter Brooke MP

From The Unionist Leaders

Mr. James Molyneaux MP - Leader Ulster Unionist Party

**Dr. Ian R. K. Paisley MP, MEP - Leader Ulster Democratic
Unionist Party**

Your letter is written as if the decisions taken at the meeting with the Prime Minister had not been arrived at.

At the end of that meeting we read to the Prime Minister and all present, the enclosed statement and there was no objection raised that there was anything inaccurate in it about our conclusions.

Note carefully paragraphs two and three of this document which are totally in keeping with our communication to you yesterday.

We accepted the Prime Minister's assurance that we would not be asked to agree the procedures on Strands two and three until we had clarification on:-

(i) The so-called independent Chairman,
and,

(ii) The location of the proposed venue in Northern Ireland.

So far, these clarifications have not been forthcoming.

We accepted the assurance of the Prime Minister that the independent Chairman would not be appointed without the consent of all concerned. Both you and the Prime Minister acknowledged that it would be 'madness' to appoint such a Chairman on any other basis. Why is this now completely dropped from your understanding of the meeting?

We also accepted the Prime Minister's assurance that clarification of,

(i) The identity of the Chairman,

(ii) The Standing Orders under which he would preside,

(iii) His power to hold meetings, their composition and locations,

would be forthcoming before we would be expected to respond. So far, that clarification has not been forthcoming either. Is this because of Mr. Collins' Far East Tour?

Further, we accepted the Prime Minister's assurance that clarification would be given to us of the location of those meetings of Strand two to be held in Northern Ireland. We were not expected to agree until we had this information and considered it. Once again, no such clarification has been received by us.

On our part, we stressed that we did not accept the principle of the appointment of an independent Chairman at all, but if the clarifications concerning his operations were reasonable, then in view of the Prime Minister's assurance about the manner of his appointment, we would be prepared to work under him.

We also intimated to the Prime Minister that the matter of meetings on Strand two in Northern Ireland had been accepted by us in a proposal submitted to you last Monday.

We affirm that all the assurances we gave to the Prime Minister will be fully and faithfully adhered to and we expect that you will carry out fully and faithfully the assurances that he gave to us.

We await the clarifications promised.

In keeping with our assurances we will be attending the plenary meeting on Monday 20 May at Stormont at 10:30 am to continue Strand one of the talks on the basis agreed with the Prime Minister.

Statement 15 May, 1991

The talks were most helpful and encouraging and the Prime Minister showed his dedication to take time to deal with the difficulties that had arisen.

We were glad to have clarified that the word basis used in paragraph two of what had been called an ultimatum referred to the procedures Strands two and three and not to the basis upon which Strand one was being held.

As we made clear before coming here today, we intend pressing on with Strand one.

In regard to the other matters concerning Strands two and three, we intimated that we needed the matters of an 'Independent Chairman' and the locations in Northern Ireland fully clarified before we could have full agreement.

We obtained assurances that an independent Chairman - whatever his nationality - would not result in international adjudication on, for example, the Irish territorial claim to Northern Ireland.