

# JOINT UNIONIST POSITION PAPER

(Tuesday 21st May 1991)

1. We are concerned to see some constructive progress in the Talks process. We are already participating in Strand 1 and we see no justifiable impediment to the commencement of plenaries in that strand. We are however seized of the urgency to resolve, in the margins of the Conference, the outstanding issues which will clear the way for Strand 2 leading on to Strand 3.
2. There should be no doubt as to our determination to complete the process in each of its strands as evidenced by our endorsement of the 26th March 1991 statement.
3. In particular while we did not accept the principle of the appointment of an independent Chairman, if the clarifications concerning his identity and operations were reasonable and in view of the understanding that all the parties would need to be content with a particular nominee before the two governments would proceed to make the appointment, we would be willing to work under him. We also understand that the appointment of an independent Chairman does not mean that the issues in Strand 2 would be open to international adjudication.
4. We consider it important to determine the terms of reference for the independent Chairman and the standing orders by which he will regulate meetings in Strand 2. We do not expect these to be bulky, complex or controversial.
5. In terms of venue the difficulty has been considerably narrowed. We agree that the opening plenary meeting of Strand 2 would be held in London and the bulk of substantive discussions in Northern Ireland before a plenary meeting in Dublin. We anticipate that both the London and Dublin meetings will have weighty agendas which may cause them to last for longer than one day. It only remains for the Secretary of State to reach agreement with all participating parties on a precise location for those meetings of Strand 2 which it has been agreed should take place within Northern Ireland.
6. The Secretary of State has outlined how the participating Northern Ireland parties will relate to the Strand 3 discussions (see Annex A). We have noted these arrangements and are willing to work them. In addition we have made clear our wish to have the opportunity afforded by the last plenary meeting in Strand 2 to put to the two governments our views on issues we believe they should address in Strand 3. We also understand that progress in Strand 3 discussions may necessitate further meetings of Strand 1 or Strand 2 as appropriate.
7. We will deal expeditiously with the outstanding issues on receipt of proposals or if it is helpful we are prepared to make further suggestions ourselves. Moreover, as considerable time has already passed and as we would have hoped to have concluded Strands 1 and 2 by the end of June, we are willing to intensify the talks process in an effort to meet the common commitment to the 26 March time-scale.

**SECRETARY OF STATE'S  
STATEMENT**

**RE: STRAND 3**

"While participating parties remain free to discuss strand three issues with the governments, strand three discussions will be concerned with the relationship between the two governments, and will take place between the two governments:

- other participating parties will be kept in touch with progress during strand three by regular liaison
- the two governments will meet other participating parties at their request for further discussions of strand three issues while strand three is taking place
- the outcome of strand three will be considered by all the participants alongside the outcome of the other two strands and nothing will be finally agreed in any strand until everything is agreed in the talks as a whole."