

RECORD OF A BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT TEAM
AND THE ALLIANCE PARTY, HELD IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS ON
THURSDAY 30 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 D J R Hill
Mr Marsh

In attendance

Mr Pawson

The meeting, which was held at the Alliance Party's request, began at 10.45 am and ended at 11.30 am. There was a break between 11.10 am and 11.15 am.

2. The Alliance Party said that the whole process was now surrounded by confusion. Senior Unionists were claiming that the name of an independent Chairman had not been put to them the previous day; this was clearly at variance with the facts. There had been a clear attempt to mislead other participants and the general public. The integrity, and whole standing, of the process was being damaged. The Alliance Party too, who sought to play by the rules, was being damaged. The situation was intolerable. The Secretary of State must clear the air by making clear that a specific name for an independent Chairman had been put to the Unionists the previous day.

3. The Government Team took note, observing that many Unionist comments had been freelance and not made on behalf of the parties.

4. During the recess, occasioned by the Secretary of State having to take a telephone call, it became apparent that the media were carrying the story of Lord Carrington's rejection by the Unionists; the Government Team subsequently reported that Lord Carrington himself would be making a statement shortly.

5. The Alliance Party asked about the status of the guidelines for the conduct of the second strand; here too it appeared that some Unionists were trying to fog the issue. The Government Team replied that the Unionists had indicated where they were unhappy with the original document and that wording had been sought to accommodate them; the majority of the document remained unaltered. Neither the Alliance Party nor the SDLP had been sent the latest draft; that would happen when agreement had been reached by all those presently in conflict. The Alliance Party took note.

6. In further discussion the following points were noted:-

- (i) the workplan for the first strand had now been accepted subject to some presentational amendments; and
- (ii) it was now for the two Governments to continue the search for an independent chairman.

TALKS SECRETARIAT