

ALLIANCE PARTY RESPONSE PAPER, 25.6.91

PROGRAMME FOR TALKS

1. It is clear that the time that we had hoped would be available for talks on the **substantive issues** prior to the summer has now been drastically shortened. The appreciation of this has provoked some proposals for an intensification of the talks. (see Unionist Position Paper)

2. We have no objection to a realistic intensification, but the purpose of intensifying talks is not to chalk up a certain number of hours. Rather it is to reach agreements as quickly as possible.

3. It must also be realized that the high levels of intensification proposed are required only by the unionist insistence that all business must be completed by 10 July. If they could find a way to accept that instead of only one gap in the meetings of the Anglo-Irish Conference, they could actually negotiate a second gap, then the business could be done in a much more effective fashion. Care must also be taken in intensification since it is possible that certain types of intensification proposal could mitigate against progress rather than for it.

4. Any proposals for intensification must look not merely at the number of hours worked, but at the form of the working arrangements, and the programme of work. The mere number of hours worked is a primitive notion of intensity of work.

5. We would acknowledge as indicated in the Joint Unionist Position Paper, para 3, that Strand 2 as well as Strand 1 must be addressed, since there is no agreement in any strand without agreement in all strands.

6. Given these requirements, and wishing to respond constructively, we would suggest that acceptance of the spirit of the Unionist Proposals would necessitate a working schedule as follows:

Tuesday 25 10.30 - 9.30

Identify common themes. Present proposals, from the four parties, for new internal political structures and security and economic arrangements.

Wednesday 26 9.30 - 9.30

Complete presentations by the parties, and identify working groups for following week.

Parties would use Thursday through to Monday to assimilate the other parties' proposals, make ready papers, and brief individuals for the working groups.

Monday 1 9.30 - 9.30

Working groups commence. These would concentrate on particular areas, with regular breaks to report back to their leaders who would co-ordinate the overall approach, and might then meet together to resolve areas of blockage or particular contention.

Tuesday 2 9.30 - 9.30

Continuation of working groups.

Wednesday 3 9.30 - 9.30

Completion of working groups.

Thursday 4 9.30 - 9.30

Presentation to plenary of 'final interim' positions with relevant qualifications and agreement on form of meetings of Strand 2.

Parties would then use the time from Thursday through to Monday to prepare for Strand 2.

Monday 8 9.30 - 9.30

Strand 2 meeting commences in London.

Tuesday 9 10.30 - 9.30

Strand 2 meeting continues in Belfast.
(late start due to travel)

Wednesday 10 10.30 - 9.30

(late start due to travel)

Strand 2 meeting finishes in Dublin with further 'final interim' positions.

We have serious doubts as to the practicality of such a schedule, but see no option given the unionist insistence that everything has to be sorted out by July 10.

Further discussions are needed to resolve the impasse otherwise the talks are slipping towards breakdown.