

DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT: 3 JULY

There was a plenary session this morning.

The Secretary of State reported that, in a series of bilateral meetings with the leaders of the political parties which he, accompanied by Dr Mawhinney, had held on the previous day, discussion had focused on the implications of the approaching end of the period set aside for the political talks announced in his parliamentary statement of 26 March. Given the fact that the process as a whole could not now be completed in the time remaining, it was clear that it would be difficult to make further progress towards specific proposals. *

The Secretary of State explained that he had therefore concluded that the talks should accordingly be brought to an end.

The Secretary of State and the party leaders agreed that the Talks had been valuable and had produced genuine dialogue.

The Secretary of State made clear his own wish in due course to explore the possibility of finding terms on which fresh discussions could be held.

* I indicated that it was also an issue of no prospect of resumption of the talks, but this was refused by IRK + JM.