



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
WHITEHALL  
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dr John Alderdice  
Alliance Party  
55 Knock Road  
BELFAST  
BT5 6LB

29 October 1995

*Dear John:*

As you know, the Government is committed to moving the political process on as quickly as possible. The Government believes that the "twin tracks" concept offers the best prospect of success at present.

I attach a paper setting out what we believe are the essential elements of a twin track approach, covering both the role of an International Body in relation to decommissioning and preparatory talks to discuss the ground rules for all-party negotiations. The Government's position on the need to build the necessary confidence to ensure all parties can participate in negotiations, and the crucial importance of progress on the decommissioning issue in securing this confidence, remains unchanged.

This paper is intended to enable discussion of the concepts underlying the twin tracks approach. It is not a draft text and the exact words used are therefore less important than the intentions behind them. If there can be a shared understanding of the key elements, then it should be straightforward for the two Governments to agree language in which to express this.

In that spirit, I should be grateful for your comments and thoughts on the concepts described in the attached paper. I or Michael Ancram would be happy to meet you to discuss these.





We are also giving this paper to other parties in Northern Ireland,  
the Irish Government and the US Government.

*James / [unclear]*  
*Pat. H.*



[26 OCTOBER 1995]

This paper is intended to facilitate a shared understanding among all those involved of the building blocks for a twin track approach to the way forward. It is not a draft text itself, although such a text would need to be prepared and agreed by the two Governments.

#### TWIN TRACKS

1. All-party preparatory talks and an independent international body to consider the decommissioning issue will be convened in parallel by the 2 governments.
2. A target date for the beginning of all-party political negotiations might be announced at the outset. Achieving the target would depend on success in creating the necessary conditions to enable all parties to join in such negotiations constructively. Both governments will commit themselves to working with others to create those conditions. Much would depend on the co-operation relevant parties gave to both tracks.

#### Track 1: PREPARATORY TALKS

3. These talks will be sponsored by the 2 governments with a remit to reach agreement, acceptable to all parties, on the basis, participation, structure, format and agenda for all-party political negotiations.
4. It will be open to any party to raise any relevant matter, including how best the structure and format of all-party negotiations can properly take account of democratic mandates and principles, including whether and how an elected body could play a part.
5. The process of preparatory talks will be jointly managed by the two Governments. Each will build on existing exchanges and bilateral contacts, treating each party on an equal basis. The two



Governments will jointly encourage other formats for meetings with the parties and among the parties which might further the objective of the preparatory talks.

#### Track 2: INTERNATIONAL BODY

6. The international body would be established by the 2 governments. It would be composed of 3 or more people of international standing likely to enjoy widespread confidence. It is hoped the chairman would be a distinguished American.

7. The body would be asked to ascertain and advise on how unauthorised arms and other materiel which had been used to advance political ends could forever be removed from the political equation. In particular, the body would have a remit:

- to identify and advise on a suitable and acceptable method for full and verifiable decommissioning;
- to report whether there is a clear commitment, by or on behalf of those in possession of such arms, to a satisfactory process to achieve that;

8. Neither government, nor any other party co-operating with the work of the body, would be bound in advance to accept its conclusions.

9. The body would be advisory rather than operational at this stage. Subsequently, in the light of its report and subject to its acceptability to all concerned, the Body might have a role to play in verification.



10. The body would determine its own procedures to give effect to its remit. It would be asked to consult widely. It would, for example, be open to the body to listen to any suggestions or representations it thought relevant, or to make suggestions of its own and gauge their acceptability.
11. The body would report by [...] to the two Governments who would consider carefully any recommendations it made and give them due weight on their merits.
12. In establishing the body with the Irish Government, HMG will be ready to reaffirm its own willingness to take responsive measures, on the advice of the security forces, as movement on unauthorised arms and other materiel reduced the threat.
13. If the body were established, the British Government would also explain its position in these terms -

'HMG's position on the need for decommissioning is on the public record and is well understood. The [body] is expected to give advice on the commitment to decommissioning and on acceptable methods of achieving it (ie Washington 1 & 2). The Government firmly hopes that, if all the relevant parties co-operate, the [body] will succeed in charting a way forward acceptable to all sides. The Government will consider its recommendations carefully, giving them due weight on their merits'

October 1995