

RECORD OF A PLENARY SESSION HELD AT PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS  
ON THE MORNING OF 3 JULY 1991

<u>Government Team</u>	<u>Alliance Party</u>	<u>UUP</u>
Secretary of State	Dr Alderdice	Mr Molyneaux
Minister of State	Mr Close	Mr Cunningham
PUS	Mr Dickson	Mr Nicholson
Mr Fell	Mr McGarry	Mr Allen
Mr Pilling	Mr McBride	Mr Empey
Mr Thomas	Mr Dickson	Mr McGimpsey
Mr McNeill	Mrs Bell	Mr Donaldson
<u>Talks Secretariat</u>	<u>SDLP</u>	<u>UDUP</u>
Mr D J R Hill	Mr Hume	Dr Paisley
Mr Pope	Mr McGrady	Mr Robinson
Mr Marsh	Mr Haughey	Rev McCrea
Mr Hallett		
Mr Watson	Mr Farren	Mr Vitty
	Mrs Rodgers	Mr Campbell
<u>Others present</u>	Mr Durkan	Mr Wilson
Mr Pawson	Mr Gallagher	Mr Gibson

The meeting began at 10.05 and concluded at 10.29.

2. The Government Team summarised the position which had been reached during the previous day's discussions. While serious business had been done during the previous week, we were now faced with an impasse. As a result of the shortage of time caused by the earlier procedural problems the whole process could not now be completed before the present Talks came to an end. Because of that, it was difficult for certain parties to put forward substantive proposals in a situation where there would be no clear conclusion to the discussions. Following meetings with the Party Leaders, the Government Team had concluded that, against that background, it was sensible to bring the present Talks to an end now. It was important, however, to do so without rancour or recrimination, if the process were to be resumed at some stage in the future.

2. The Government Team paid tribute to the courage of the political parties in coming to the present Talks and to the commitment shown in the discussions. There had been a display of mutual respect and a serious willingness to do business.

The Government statement to the House of Commons would be a neutral account of the position reached. Some delegates had suggested that there were lessons to be learned in the event of a future resumption. The Government Team hoped that the parties would communicate any such views to each other and to the Government. One lesson which the Government Team would wish to draw was the importance of preserving the confidentiality of the discussions. The Government Team would make clear to the House of Commons their wish that the process might resume at some stage in the future.

3. The Government Team then circulated a draft press statement and invited comments. The Alliance Party proposed including a reference to the lack of any immediate prospect of a resumption of the Talks as a factor preventing further progress. The Government Team replied that they preferred the statement to be based on the terms of the 26 March statement. The other parties indicated their agreement with this approach. The UUP commented that it was clearly understood that the Talks were to take place during "one single period of suspension only". The Government Team said that the press statement, as agreed, would now be circulated.

4. The Government Team then invited delegates to make any other comments they wished.

5. The UUP paid tribute to the tenacity, courtesy and patience of the Secretary of State and to his courage in taking the decision to bring the current Talks to an end.

6. The DUP endorsed the UUP comments and expressed appreciation for the frank and open nature of the discussions. There had been a "wholesome debate" on matters where there was a "deep cleavage" in positions. The DUP regretted that the British and Irish Governments had not seen fit to allow the time lost earlier to be made up.

7. The Alliance Party also expressed appreciation of the Secretary of State's efforts. They valued the open and honest discussions which had taken place. They left, however, with a feeling of regret that the present process had not been able to continue. They hoped there would be a resumption in the future.

8. The SDLP joined with the other parties in paying tribute to the Government Team. They regretted that the present position had been reached, but expressed appreciation of the courtesy and frankness of the other delegations. The SDLP praised the efforts of all the staff who had serviced the Talks. The DUP associated themselves with this sentiment.

9. The Government Team then expressed thanks to all the delegates for their efforts during the Talks.

10. The SDLP expressed the hope that no-one would speak to the press until after the Government statement in the House of Commons. The DUP said, however, that they proposed to issue a press statement. The Government Team hoped that this would reflect the spirit of non-recrimination. The DUP replied that the statement would record the position as they saw it.

TALKS SECRETARIAT

