

THE ALLIANCE PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Guideline Statement for all news media on the formation of The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

1. The Alliance Party, as its name implies, is an alliance of Catholics and Protestants throughout Northern Ireland. Its membership is comprised of people from all income groups and all walks of life.
2. The Party is an alliance of all the moderate people of Northern Ireland. It is determined to ensure that those people are represented in Parliament and elsewhere by moderate representatives and not by extremists.
3. The Party supports the constitutional link between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.
4. The Party does not pursue any doctrinaire economic philosophy. Its approach to economic problems is pragmatic. Northern Ireland cannot yet afford the luxury of politics based on doctrinaire economic philosophies. The first priority is to crack the sectarian problem and in any event our economic destinies are largely determined outside Northern Ireland.
5. The Alliance Party considers that the maintenance of rigorous and impartial law and order is a first essential in the Northern Ireland situation. Extremists or others who break the law will be firmly dealt with. We consider that the right place for politics is in Parliament - not in the streets.
6. We regard the Opposition parties' sorry record of failure in Northern Ireland as indicative of their futility. None of the Opposition parties can seriously claim that they offer a viable solution. Up to now the alternative has been to vote Unionist or vote for failure.
7. Our attitude to the Unionist Party can be summed up as follows:- it is no longer a credible political force. It is hopelessly split at least three ways. First, there are the liberal Unionists; Secondly, there are the "Unity" Unionists for whom the unity of the Party is all important. Thirdly, there are the "extremist" Unionists, some of whom are still in the Party and some of whom have been expelled. The Unionist Party will, we believe, never recover from its present divisions and is rapidly falling apart. It can do little for Northern Ireland.
8. It is important that a distinction be drawn between the Government and the Unionist Party. We recognise that this is a unique situation in politics. The Government, like ourselves, unequivocally supports the reform programme. This is more than can be said for the Unionist Party, large sections of which do not support the reforms and other sections of which merely pay 'lip service' to them and cannot be counted upon to push them through in a crisis.
9. The rise of the Paisley Protestant Unionist Party has exacerbated the divisions between the Unionist Party and the Government and greatly weakens the position of the liberal Unionists who can now not be sure of re-nomination, let alone winning even if nominated.
10. The Alliance Party finds itself, for all these reasons, in the following position. We will lend all our aid and support to the Government so long as it is pursuing and is able to pursue the implementation of the reform programme, and while it is doing this we would ask all members of Parliament, regardless of party, to

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give unequivocal support to this programme. We do not want those members of the Unionist Parliamentary Party who have shown in the past and are showing to-day their honest determination to implement reforms in the face of severe opposition to resign the Whip, if by so doing it would imperil the reform programme. Events inside the Unionist Party have convinced us that it is by no means certain that the Government will be allowed to complete its programme. In that event we are the only viable alternative to the Unionist Party.

11. FINALLY, we wish to point out that we have succeeded in creating a Province-wide political organisation of the moderate people, which is firm on the constitutional issue, provides a viable alternative to the existing splintered Unionist Party, and combines Catholics and Protestants together in a partnership which is the essential prerequisite for a new deal in Northern Ireland.