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Ulster Democratic Unionist Party

submission on

**COMMON ISSUES
AND
PROPOSITIONS**

28 June 1991

THE PROCESS NOW

1. We are genuinely encouraged by the improved atmosphere in the talks process and particularly in the last few days. The examination of general issues has aided our understanding of the positions and expectations of other delegations. It has been useful in identifying areas where, even now, convergence appears possible and others which will require closer study.
2. In this context the Secretary of State's paper "*Common Issues and Propositions*" presented on 26 June 1991 is useful. It is not, nor did it purport to be, an exhaustive nor entirely accurate account of the areas where the position of the parties approximate. In our view, while it is not a fairly balanced digest of our work so far, it does, however, provide a helpful guide for the preparation of this paper.

BRITISH/IRISH RELATIONSHIPS

3. Whereas the immediate business for delegations relates to Strand 1 matters, the inter-relationship of issues germane to other Strands was predicted, provided for, and did in fact occur. Important subjects relevant to other relationships have been well aired and though we would not wish to present too up-beat a picture there were some promising indicators. Although we recognise that resolution of the *territorial claim* contained in Articles Two and Three, is a matter relevant particularly to the government of the Irish Republic and her people, we were heartened to learn that the

S.D.L.P. could, in the right circumstances, contemplate change in this respect. We re-state that should their view be shared by the other Strand 2 delegations then we would be free to consider a relationship which is not conceivable in the existing context.

4. For our part, we have noted, and therefore will reflect seriously upon, the S.D.L.P. view that *"the ultimate resolution"* of the *"ancient quarrel"* should come about within the context of the wider British/Irish process. Though we see the people of Northern Ireland as one community we cannot but recognise that there are separate identities which reach out beyond the confines of Northern Ireland itself. We are prepared to submit precise proposals to address this relationship at the appropriate point in Strand 2.

THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

5. All the parties to the talks appear to accept that in the event of agreement on the *three strand process* a new British/Irish Agreement would become what we have described as *"an alternative to and replacement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement"*.

NORTHERN IRELAND - STATUS AND STRUCTURES

6. In terms of the key relationship we welcome the fact that the Secretary of State's document recognises that there is *"general support for the proposition that Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom"* and that there is *"a need for greater direct local political involvement in the business of governing Northern*

Ireland". This leads us to contemplate, within this context, the type of structure which can take account of the community divisions on the one hand and the need for good and accountable government on the other.

7. We endorse the view that the transfer of legislative and administrative responsibilities to local representatives over the widest possible range of matters is both desirable, workable and achievable. While we have stated we recognise that pre-1972 majority rule will not return, we have concluded that executive power-sharing as of right government has also failed.
8. In his introductory remarks the Secretary of State suggested that any new arrangements should be workable and likely to prove stable and durable. He suggested that they should command widespread support and provide an appropriate and fair role for both sides of the community.
9. In this context it seems to us unnecessary, for a small community of one and a half million people, to provide complex and elaborate executive structures. Bearing this in mind, and in keeping with the Secretary of State's comments along with the views expressed in written and oral presentations from other delegations, we believe we are capable of presenting proposals which would give "majority and minority" alike a real say, influence and part in the administration and decision making process in Northern Ireland.
10. Our proposals would be such that each constitutional party would have a role commensurate with its support. The structure

we suggest will allow "majority and minority" representatives of constitutional parties to say that they are represented at the highest level and for their part the minority would be involved in a very real way and be in a position to speak and act for those whom they represent.

RIGHTS

11. We will maintain a reasonable and flexible approach to the consideration of proposals aimed at protecting individual rights and community interests and have further specific proposals on these matters. We are willing to submit papers, at the appropriate moment, on these issues and we will consider carefully the propositions of others.
12. We remain committed to the concept of a *Bill of Rights and Responsibilities*.

ENDORSEMENT

13. We have recognised the strength with which the S.D.L.P. have expressed their view regarding the validation of a potential agreement. They will acknowledge our concerns in this respect. However, in the light of what we have heard, we undertake to consider and draft further proposals in an attempt to establish other ways in which it might be possible to address this issue.

SECURITY

14. We take account of the view expressed by the Secretary of State that:-

"There is general acceptance that no political accommodation could influence a highly committed individual to abandon terrorism, but I detect general assent to the proposition that a prosperous, stable community with vibrant and effective local political institutions might undermine the motivation of at least some terrorists and would indeed make it harder for terrorists to obtain the practical and moral support they require. I of course note and accept the argument that determined and effective security force action will be a necessary component in bringing terrorism to an end."

15. It is our view that the main impact upon terrorism from a political accommodation will come through the removal of all ambiguity about Northern Ireland's constitutional position. Some terrorists derive their motivation from the belief that, because doubt surrounds Northern Ireland's status as part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland can be dislodged through violence. When there is a wholehearted commitment by political representatives to our security forces - the regular army, the U.D.R., the R.U.C. and its Reserve - it will have a formidable effect upon the community which will eventually contribute to weakening the terrorist.

16. The defeat of terrorism is our over-riding concern and in our view a local institution should be able to exercise significant influence over, and have a meaningful role in, security matters. We are pleased that the Secretary of State has accepted our argument that it is a necessary component of bringing terrorism to an end, that the government should press ahead relentlessly on the security front with the battle against terrorism.

RELATIONSHIP WITH WESTMINSTER

17. It will be essential to pursue and reach agreement on how the crucially important issue of the relationship between a new Northern Ireland administration and the United Kingdom government and parliament will work and in particular how non-transferred matters might properly be considered at Westminster.
18. We re-affirm our commitment to work positively and strenuously towards agreement. We trust that the necessary time will be made available, without interruption, to accomplish the task and that the momentum, now being built up, will not be lost.