



## An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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## POSITION PAPER

### TALKS TIME-TABLE

1. All delegations entered the present talks process on the same basis - the Secretary of State's 26 March statement. In the statement Mr Brooke said:-

*"To allow an opportunity for such a wider political dialogue, the two governments have agreed not to hold a meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference between two pre-specified dates. All parties concerned will make use of this interval for intense discussions to seek the new and more broadly based agreement which I have just mentioned."*

2. Unionists entered into these discussions on the basis of,

*"a suspension of the working of the Anglo-Irish Agreement".*

In our own discussions with the Secretary of State it was indicated that a period of about 10 weeks would be made available for the talks. Later, and without reference to us, the two governments announced the time-band. We do not intend, in this document, to wrangle about the cause for delaying the talks process to deal with procedural matters which we felt could and should have been dealt with in the margins of Strand 1. Sufficient for us to state the obvious - when we commenced plenary sessions on Monday 17 June 1991, seven weeks after the bilateral talks started on Tuesday 30 April, only 4 of the 11 week time-band remained.

2. Mr Brooke's statement of 26 March clearly shows that the talks began after the last Conference meeting and will end when the next one takes place. It is therefore only the insistence on a meeting under the auspices of the Anglo Irish Agreement that brings the agreed process to a conclu-

sion.

3. We are anxious to make urgent progress and, in keeping with our determination to make progress in Strand 1, and thereby, if possible, to move to Strand 2, we propose a significant intensification of the talks.

4. The proposal involves a six-day week with morning, afternoon and evening sessions on a number of days. The programme is such that we can condense the number of available hours the Secretary of State had originally proposed for the 10 week process into the time available. In effect this intensification will put the talks back on the original course in terms of available hours.

5. We not only propose that the available hours be substantially increased but suggest that the manner in which the talks are operating could be improved as soon as the preliminary presentations are completed. We suggest a more flexible approach which allows the discussions on the workplan issues to continue while small working groups, perhaps under the Minister of State, assess and put together areas of agreement.

6. If the two formats operate in parallel it will eliminate time-wastage. The Minister of State would take ownership of any recommendations to be brought forward. He would nevertheless be guided by the working-groups.

7. These proposals are a genuine attempt to preserve the talks and bring about a momentum that alone can bring success. Undoubtedly the programme we offer will cause havoc with all our diaries - we recognise the difficulties - but we feel the benefits that could flow

to Northern Ireland from this process would make the additional effort worthwhile.

**8. This proposal:-**

- \* is jointly made by the two unionist delegations.

- \* acknowledges that the Minister of State will deputise for the Secretary of State from time to time;

- \* recognises that all members of

each delegation will not be able to attend at all times;

- \* is not solely for plenary sessions - it will be used for some working groups and other non-plenary meetings employing a more flexible approach;

- \* re-instates the 1 July;

- \* permits 10 weeks available hours of the original plan to be carried out in the now limited period;

## Schedule "A"

### Actual time available

#### INTENDED PROGRAMME

After lunchtime, teatime and coffee breaks have been deducted the original working day of 10.30am - 12.30pm & 2.30pm - 5.00pm with two 15 minute breaks leaves 4 hours per day. There were to be 10 weeks available and it was planned to work 3 days each week.

10 weeks x 3 days x 4 hours = 120 hours available

INTENDED PROGRAMME = 120 hours available

## Schedule "B"

### Actual time available

#### PRESENT PROGRAMME

|        |               |   |                  |   |                                   |             |
|--------|---------------|---|------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Mon 17 | 12.50 - 1.05  | & | 2.30 - 5.00      |   |                                   | = 2.5 hours |
| Tue 18 | 10.30 - 12.30 | & | 2.30 - 4.30      |   |                                   | = 3.5 hours |
| Wed 19 | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 5.00      |   |                                   | = 4.5 hours |
| Mon 24 | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 6.00      |   |                                   | = 5.5 hours |
| Tue 25 | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 5.00      | & | 6.00 - 8.30                       | = 7.0 hours |
| Wed 26 | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 6.00      |   |                                   |             |
| Tue 2  | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 5.00      | & | 6.00 - 8.30                       | = 7.0 hours |
| Wed 3  | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 6.00      |   |                                   | = 5.5 hours |
| Mon 8  |               |   | time not yet set |   |                                   | = 5.5 hours |
| Tue 9  |               |   | time not yet set |   | (but if the same as 24/26 then:-) | = 7.0 hours |
| Wed 10 |               |   | time not yet set |   |                                   | = 5.5 hours |

PRESENT PROGRAMME = 59 hours available

# SCHEDULE "C"

## Actual time available

### PROPOSED PROGRAMME

{The hour total is after breaks deducted}

|        |               |   |             |   |                         |
|--------|---------------|---|-------------|---|-------------------------|
| Mon 17 | 12.50 - 1.05  | & | 2.30 - 5.00 | = | 2.5 hours               |
| Tue 18 | 10.30 - 12.30 | & | 2.30 - 4.30 | = | 3.5 hours               |
| Wed 19 | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | = | 4.5 hours               |
| Mon 24 | 10.30 - 12.45 | & | 2.15 - 6.00 | = | 5.5 hours               |
| Tue 25 | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Wed 26 | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Thu 27 | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Fri 28 | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 6.30 | = | 7.0 hours               |
| Sat 29 | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 6.30 | = | 7.0 hours               |
| Mon 1  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 6.30 | = | 7.0 hours               |
| Tue 2  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Wed 3  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Thu 4  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Fri 5  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 6.30 | = | 7.0 hours               |
| Sat 6  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 6.30 | = | 7.0 hours               |
| Mon 8  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Tue 9  | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |
| Wed 10 | 9.30 - 12.45  | & | 2.15 - 5.00 | & | 6.00 - 9.30 = 8.5 hours |

PROPOSED WORKPLAN = 127.5 hours available.

## ALLIANCE PARTY RESPONSE PAPER, 25.6.91

## PROGRAMME FOR TALKS

1. It is clear that the time that we had hoped would be available for talks on the substantive issues prior to the summer has now been drastically shortened. The appreciation of this has provoked some proposals for an intensification of the talks. (see Unionist Position Paper)
2. We have no objection to a realistic intensification, but the purpose of intensifying talks is not to chalk up a certain number of hours. Rather it is to reach agreements as quickly as possible.
3. It must also be realized that the high levels of intensification proposed are required only by the unionist insistence that all business must be completed by 10 July. If they could find a way to accept that instead of only one gap in the meetings of the Anglo-Irish Conference, they could actually negotiate a second gap, then the business could be done in a much more effective fashion. Care must also be taken in intensification since it is possible that certain types of intensification proposal could mitigate against progress rather than for it.
4. Any proposals for intensification must look not merely at the number of hours worked, but at the form of the working arrangements, and the programme of work. The mere number of hours worked is a primitive notion of intensity of work.
5. We would acknowledge as indicated in the Joint Unionist Position Paper, para 3, that Strand 2 as well as Strand 1 must be addressed, since there is no agreement in any strand without agreement in all strands.
6. Given these requirements, and wishing to respond constructively, we would suggest that acceptance of the spirit of the Unionist Proposals would necessitate a working schedule as follows:

**Tuesday 25 10.30 - 9.30**

Identify common themes. Present proposals, from the four parties, for new internal political structures and security and economic arrangements.

**Wednesday 26 9.30 - 9.30**

Complete presentations by the parties, and identify working groups for following week.



Parties would use Thursday through to Monday to assimilate the other parties' proposals, make ready papers, and brief individuals for the working groups.

**Monday 1 9.30 - 9.30**

Working groups commence. These would concentrate on particular areas, with regular breaks to report back to their leaders who would co-ordinate the overall approach, and might then meet together to resolve areas of blockage or particular contention.

**Tuesday 2 9.30 - 9.30**

Continuation of working groups.

**Wednesday 3 9.30 - 9.30**

Completion of working groups.

**Thursday 4 9.30 - 9.30**

Presentation to plenary of 'final interim' positions with relevant qualifications and agreement on form of meetings of Strand 2.

Parties would then use the time from Thursday through to Monday to prepare for Strand 2.

**Monday 8 9.30 - 9.30**

Strand 2 meeting commences in London.

**Tuesday 9 10.30 - 9.30**

Strand 2 meeting continues in Belfast.  
(late start due to travel)

**Wednesday 10 10.30 - 9.30**  
(late start due to travel)

Strand 2 meeting finishes in Dublin with further 'final interim' positions.

We have serious doubts as to the practicality of such a schedule, but see no option given the unionist insistence that everything has to be sorted out by July 10.

Further discussions are needed to resolve the impasse otherwise the talks are slipping towards breakdown.