



The Stormont Talks, 1997

PORTFOLIO GUIDE

Freeze Date: 17th July, 1997



Note from the Executive Board:

Delegates, please note that this Portfolio Guide entails the policy of all the allotments present in committee and is meant to serve as the reference for the policy of all delegates in committee. Thus, no further individual research is required by the delegates.

During committee, the delegates are expected to balance their personal and party policies, in order to work towards a peaceful settlement. While adhering to their personal, as well as, party policy, the delegates are reminded that each of them have solemnly affirmed and agreed to abide by the “Mitchell Principles” on 10th June, 1996. For any further clarifications, feel free to contact any member of the Executive Board.

Regards,
The Executive Board,
The Stormont Talks, 1997,
X-MUN 2025.

Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

The Rt Hon. Lord Alderdice, MP



Positions: Leader of the Alliance Party(1987-Present), Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for East Belfast, Member of the House of Lords (Since 1996), Baron of Knock in the County of Down.

Born in 1955 in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, John Alderdice is the son of a Presbyterian minister. Alderdice entered the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI) in 1978, becoming a member of the party's ruling council by 1979 and holding the office of Vice-Chairman. Although not yet sitting in elected office, he was elected the leader of the party in October 1987 and has remained so until present. He is unwavering in his advocacy of dialogue and concordance between unionist and nationalist communities. Early on, he was a doubter of the negotiations between Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams and SDLP leader John Hume, but later Alderdice officially negotiated with Sinn Féin in 1995. Alderdice supported the British government to lead the initiative in developing a model for the governance of Northern Ireland, evidencing a pragmatic stance as opposed to rigid ideological

commitment. His partnership with the Liberal Democrats in Britain, leading to his elevation into the House of Lords in 1996, demonstrates a preference for liberal policies over conventional socialist or conservative precepts. Overall, he is committed to an inclusive peace process for Northern Ireland, believing that only through inclusive and peaceful methods can a long lasting solution be found.

Eileen Bell



Positions: General Secretary of the Alliance Party (1986-Present).
Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue

Eileen Bell, a prominent figure in Northern Ireland's political landscape, was deeply committed to non-sectarianism and liberal democratic values. She has championed inclusive governance and cross-community dialogue, aligning with the party's centrist and liberal ideology. Bell's political philosophy emphasized the importance of power-sharing and the devolution of powers to a locally accountable Assembly, reflecting her dedication to fostering a balanced recognition of British and Irish identities within Northern Ireland. Throughout her career, Bell was a staunch advocate for peace and reconciliation and has been focused on the welfare of victims.

Bell also supported initiatives to increase women's participation in politics, recognizing their vital role in peacebuilding. With regard to the Sinn Féin, she closely followed the official party line. Bell's political views were characterized by a firm opposition to sectarianism and a belief in the fluidity of identity. She challenged the dominance of sectarian narratives and promoted the idea that identities are individual matters, open to change over time; as such, she has been an advocate of an inclusive peace process.

Seamus Anthony Close



Positions: Deputy Leader of the Alliance Party, Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue.

Seamus Close was born on 12 August 1947 in Lisburn, County Antrim. Close became a member of the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI) at its formation in 1970, driven by a need to make a difference, declaring, "I couldn't help make those changes by sitting on the sideline." Close is a centrist, non-sectarian politician who focuses on cross-community interaction. He is forthright and honest, frequently mentoring younger councillors without regard to party. He tells them that though debates are vehement within the council chamber, it is important to be friendly with one another outside, insisting, "If they couldn't shake hands and get on outside, they were

in the wrong business.” Close has a pragmatic policy of carefully analysing and handling all the stakeholders, even when it comes to the Sinn Féin. He entertained the idea of talks and deliberations with Sinn Féin. Close's political style is defined by pragmatism rather than rigid identification with orthodox socialist or conservative ideologies. He is committed to effective governance and accountability. Close is known for his straightforward and truthful way with words.

Sean Neeson



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for East Antrim, Member of the Carrickfergus Council(1977-Present)

Seán Neeson, a leading figure in the Alliance Party, brought with him extensive grassroots experience as a long-serving councillor on Carrickfergus Borough Council. Known for his centrist and non-sectarian stance, Neeson was instrumental in shaping the Alliance Party's policy positions on devolution, power-sharing, and cross-community cooperation. In the talks process, Neeson functioned as a bridge-builder between Unionist and Nationalist blocs, consistently advocating for democratic reforms, a Bill of Rights, and inclusive civic institutions. His approach emphasized constitutional

solutions rooted in civil rights and responsible governance. With a strong belief in European integration and its potential to aid Northern Ireland's recovery and growth, he positioned the Alliance Party as a pragmatic force focused on reconciliation and institutional stability. He advocates for a power sharing framework for both communities and was in favour of devolution of power within a UK constitutional framework. He is a proponent of non-sectarian governance, integrated education and inter community dialogue. He endorses accountable policing and demilitarisation along with an inclusive approach to the peace process.

Sir Oliver Napier



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for North Down, First Legal Minister and Head of Office for Legal Reform in the Northern Ireland Power Sharing Executive, Joint Leader of the Alliance Party(1970-1972), Sole Leader of the Alliance Party(1973-1984)

Sir Oliver Napier, a founder of the Alliance Party and a leading exponent of non-sectarian, liberal politics in a highly polarized



society. Being a dedicated centrist, he strove hard to close the gap between unionists and nationalists, championing civil rights and opposing all manifestations of political violence. Although he favored the idea of deliberating with Sinn Féin, he firmly believed this would only be done if they gave up on violence, insisting that democratic involvement necessitated a clear commitment to peace. Napier was briefly Legal Minister and head of the Office of Law Reform in the short-lived Sunningdale Executive, an experience which incurred hardline unionist criticism for his collaboration with nationalist SDLP and his liberal legal reforms. Yet, despite these controversies, he remained firm in his conviction that power-sharing and devolved government were necessary to Northern Ireland's future. Oliver Napier is recognised across party lines as someone who has promoted compromise, conversation, and equality within Northern Ireland.

Democratic Unionist Party

The Rev. and Hon. Dr. Ian Richard Kyle Paisley; MP



Positions: Leader of the DUP(1971-2008), Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for North Antrim, Member of Parliament for North Antrim, Co-Founder of Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster

Ian Richard Kyle Paisley, founder and leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) from 1971 to present, was a central figure in Northern Ireland's unionist politics and a vocal opponent of any concessions to Irish nationalism. As a delegate to both the 1991–1992 Brooke/Mayhew Talks and the Stormont Talks, and a representative in the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue from North Antrim, Paisley led the DUP's hardline stance during the peace process. He vehemently rejected power-sharing with Sinn Féin, citing its links to the IRA, and opposed the Stormont Talks, arguing it betrayed unionist interests and legitimized terrorism. Paisley opposed devolution if it meant engaging with republican parties without prior and verifiable decommissioning of weapons. He supports a devolution of power which would only provide power to the unionists while rejecting the recognition of status of nationalist parties and has worked towards

promoting a majoritarian form of devolution whereby they also rejected any form of power sharing with parties like SDLP and Sinn Féin. He has also openly supported Direct Rule as he believes it is crucial in preventing the Sinn Féin from gaining power. He has been critical of the British and Irish governments' efforts to include Sinn Féin in negotiations, accusing them of appeasement and endangering Northern Ireland's British identity. His role in the talks was marked by protest, walkouts, and a refusal to endorse any framework that included nationalist power or cross-border institutions without strict preconditions. Paisley was known for his fiery rhetoric - he once called the Pope, "Antichrist." Paisley, as such, is a hardline unionist, who refuses to even entertain the possibility of entering into talks with the Sinn Féin and is staunchly in support of maintaining the current status quo.

Nigel Alexander Dodds



Positions: Delegate to the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for North Belfast. General Secretary of the DUP (1993–Present).

Nigel Dodds, the General Secretary of the DUP, has emerged as a key strategist within the party. Dodds is deeply aligned with the DUP's

core unionist values and firmly opposes Sinn Féin's involvement in the peace process without prior disarmament. He has expressed strong concerns about the British government's pressure on unionist parties to make concessions, stating that such tactics erode trust and feed unionist skepticism. While more reserved in his public statements than some of his DUP colleagues, Dodds is nonetheless seen as a hardliner. He has contributed to developing the DUP's negotiating strategy and public communications, helping shape the party's consistent message of resistance to compromise with republicanism. Although he avoids the more provocative rhetoric employed by others, his political vision is no less committed to a unionist-first outcome.

The Hon. Peter David Robinson, MP



Position: Delegate to the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for East Belfast. MP for Belfast East (1979–Present). DUP Deputy Leader (1980–Present). General Secretary of the DUP (1975–1979).

Peter Robinson, one of the founding members of the DUP, has had a long-standing role in Northern Irish politics. Robinson's personal policy emphasizes a staunch defense of unionism, a demand for the

decommissioning of all paramilitary weapons before negotiations, and the exclusion of Sinn Féin from talks until such actions are verified. Publicly, Robinson remains firmly aligned with the party's hardline position. He has expressed skepticism of the British and Irish governments' impartiality and has accused them of unfairly pressuring unionist parties to accommodate nationalists. Robinson's engagement with the Forum for Political Dialogue has focused on holding the unionist line against what he perceives as a dangerously lenient stance toward republicanism. His sharp critiques of the peace framework have included controversial statements likening talks with Sinn Féin to negotiating with murderers.

Reverend Robert Thomas William McCrea



Positions: Delegate to the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue.

Reverend Robert McCrea, a long-time member of the DUP and influential unionist voice, served as MP for Mid Ulster until 1997 and has been actively involved in both the 1991–1992 and 1996–1998 peace negotiations. Known for his strong evangelical Protestantism and uncompromising unionist stance, McCrea has consistently opposed any involvement of Sinn Féin in talks, viewing their participation as a betrayal of victims of IRA violence. He has voiced

skepticism over the peace process, warning that it could legitimize republican terrorism. His personal policy strongly aligns with traditional DUP ideals, advocating for Northern Ireland's continued place in the United Kingdom and opposing any concessions to Irish nationalism. McCrea has been regarded as a hardliner within the unionist bloc, often expressing deep distrust toward the British and Irish governments when they appear conciliatory to nationalist demands. His rhetoric, particularly from the pulpit, has sometimes drawn criticism for inflaming tensions. However, his supporters see him as a principled defender of Ulster's British identity. With regard to the Sinn Fien, McCrea strongly follows the party line. Despite the evolving peace framework, McCrea continues to voice strong reservations about the process and remains a vocal advocate for uncompromising unionism.

Samuel Wilson



Position: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for East Belfast. Lord Mayor of Belfast (1986–87).

Sammy Wilson, a seasoned DUP politician and one of its most prominent media representatives, has been a vocal and often controversial figure in the peace process. As DUP Press Officer for over a decade and a Belfast City Councillor, Wilson has built a reputation for combative unionist rhetoric and media-savvy political



maneuvering. He entered the Stormont Talks with a firm stance opposing Sinn Féin's inclusion, echoing the DUP's demand for the full decommissioning of paramilitary weapons before political negotiations. Wilson has championed a hardline unionist policy, portraying the peace process as a slippery slope toward weakening Northern Ireland's union with Britain. He often derides any sign of compromise as betrayal and has publicly condemned fellow unionists who entertain cooperation with nationalists. Known for his blunt style and inflammatory remarks, Wilson once referred to Sinn Féin delegates as the "political wing of terrorism" and dismissed the talks as a farce unless unionist conditions were met. He remains a staunch opponent of any arrangement that he believes undermines British sovereignty in Northern Ireland.

Delegation of the Republic of Ireland

Bartholomew Patrick Ahern



Positions: Taoiseach of the Republic of Ireland

After the return of the Fianna Fáil government in 1982, Ahern built up a reputation as a conciliator - forging diplomatic relations between the trade unions and the employers. Thus, he was a pacific man of the people from very early on itself. Following the death of Albert Reynolds in November, 1994, Ahern became the leader of Fianna Fáil. Under his leadership, Fianna Fáil shifted its focus to conciliation and social reforms to appease the public and forge public unity in their favour. With the victory of the Labour Government in the UK, Ahern looked forward to fresh impetus to advance the peace process. Along with his counterpart Tony Blair, he became active in their attempts to reach some sort of agreement with regards to the situation in Northern Ireland. He personally supported Sinn Féin involvement in the multi party talks as long as they adhered to democratic principles and was personally committed to non-violence and decommissioning in Northern Ireland.

Mary Harney



Positions: Tánaiste of the Republic of Ireland

Mary Harney, serving as Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) of Ireland from 1997 to present and leader of the Progressive Democrats, was a significant figure in Irish politics during the late 1990s. Her political stance was characterized by a commitment to economic liberalism, advocating for free-market policies, reduced taxation, and privatization of state enterprises. In the context of the Northern Ireland peace process, Harney personally supported the Belfast Agreement and the principle of devolution, endorsing the idea of a power-sharing government that would respect the consent of the majority in Northern Ireland regarding its constitutional status. She emphasized the importance of democratic processes and the rule of law in resolving the conflict. Harney was critical of Sinn Féin's historical association with the Irish Republican Army (IRA). She displayed high skepticism towards Sinn Féin's suspected secret motives and vicious nature regarding involvement in the political process for achieving peace in Northern Ireland. She supported decommissioning in Northern Ireland.

Raphael Patrick Burke



Positions: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Ireland

Ray Burke, a senior Fianna Fáil politician, served as Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs from June to October 1997 during a pivotal phase of the Northern Ireland peace process. A long-time Teachta Dála for Dublin North in the Dáil Éireann, Burke had previously held several ministerial roles, including Minister for Justice and Minister for Communications. As Foreign Minister, he played a key role in facilitating the 1996. multi-party talks at Stormont, supporting the inclusion of Sinn Féin on the condition that it declared a ceasefire. Burke described the talks as a "major step forward," emphasizing the unprecedented opportunity for inclusive negotiations in a peaceful atmosphere. He was marked with a policy of inclusivity and pacific relations.

Delegation of the United Kingdom

The Rt Hon. Anthony Charles Lynton Blair, MP, PC



Positions: The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (May, 1997-Present), Leader of British Labour Party (1994-Present), Member of Parliament for Sedgefield, Privy Councillor.

After Labour leader John Smith died in 1994, Blair took over as Party Leader. He initiated a complete metamorphosis of the party on the basis of a platform he called - "New Labour," through which he abandoned classic socialist dogmas. He re-aligned the policy of the party towards Centrism, pro-business and reformation. Soon, in 1997, he secured a landslide victory in the general elections, thus, becoming the Prime Minister of Great Britain. Although he favoured the precondition of the Multi-party talks for decommissioning, he brought in more flexibility and urgency when he came into power. He had realised that stiffness was hindering constructive progress. Along with Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, he deliberated the conditions for resumption for negotiations. He was averse to letting the Sinn Féin into the talks without a ceasefire.

The Rt Hon. Marjorie Mowlam, MP, PC



*Positions: Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (May, 1997-Present).
Member of Parliament for Redcar, Privy Councillor*

Mowlam spent her early life as an ardent and assiduous political researcher. After the Labour Party's victory in May, 1997, she was appointed as the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Her appointment was greeted with high expectations for a swift change in administrative methods and revitalisation of the stalled peace process. Her early months in office however were dominated by the controversy which surrounded her decision to allow an Orange Order march to proceed down the Garvaghy Road in Portadown on 12th July 1997. She was greeted with allegations of showing bias towards the local nationalists. Mowlam was harshly criticised by the public for her alleged duplicity. She supported the policy of the prime minister concerning the decommissioning of Northern Ireland however was evidently seen to have a controversial stance of appeasing both the Sinn Fein as well as the Unionist polity.

The Hon. Paul Murphy, MP

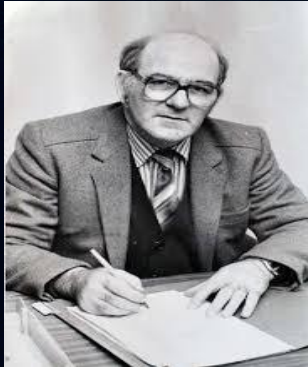


Positions: Minister of State for Northern Ireland (May, 1997-Present).
Member of Parliament for Torfaen

Murphy played a pivotal role in the progress of the Peace Process. He was favourable towards the inclusion of Sinn Féin in the multi party talks, contingent upon their commitment to non-violence and democratic principles. He formally stated that the precondition for Sinn Féin to enter the Stormont Talks would be its assent and endorsement of the Mitchell Principles and gradual decommissioning. He was vocal in his promotion of peace and order in Northern Ireland. He was highly pragmatic in his approach of working across party lines, following maxims of political dialogue and reconciliation to promote peace and stability.

Labour Coalition

Hugh Casey, MBE



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

In 1994, he left the SDLP, after accepting an MBE - which was a British honour. He had justified that some of the party members of SDLP had ostracised him for accepting a British honour, making him appear unionist. Although no Labour coalition members were directly elected, as the tenth most successful party in the election, they were entitled to two seats in the Forum. These were allocated to Hugh Casey and Malachi Curran. In the same year, he became the first Catholic Mayor of Craigavon. Casey was a man of the people, famous for his socialist stance on the affairs of life of the common man. He dedicated himself to multiple community services and to enhancing cross community pacific and ameliorated relations. He advocated on the forefront for inclusive governance in a historically scattered region - taking a hardline against majoritarian maxims. His primary goal was peace and dedicated himself to negotiations in light of pacific relations.

Malachi Curran



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue

Malachi Curran was a Northern Irish politician known for his commitment to social democracy and cross-community cooperation. He began his political career as a Labour candidate, serving on Down District Council from 1981 to 1985. In 1989, he was elected as a councillor for the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) but resigned in 1996 to co-found the Labour Coalition, aiming to provide a non-sectarian alternative in Northern Ireland politics. Curran's political stance emphasized inclusive dialogue, social justice, and the importance of democratic processes in achieving peace. Curran saw democracy not just as a method of government, but as a moral imperative necessary to reconciliation and respect for one another. His approach eschewed exclusion and sectarianism for the forging of common cause through shared civic values.

Northern Ireland Women's Coalition

Monica Mary McWilliams



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, Co-Founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition.

Monica Mary McWilliams, co-founder the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) in 1996. Motivated by the exclusion of women's voices from Northern Irish politics, McWilliams helped establish the NIWC as a cross-community, non-sectarian party focused on gender equality, social inclusion, and reconciliation. A strong supporter of dialogue and compromise, she believes lasting peace must include not only political agreements but also social justice and human rights. While she does not align with Sinn Féin's agenda, she supports their inclusion in the talks and opposes the exclusion of any democratic party. She remains critical of all forms of violence, whether from paramilitaries or state forces, and advocates for a peaceful, negotiated settlement. Considered a moderate rather than a hardliner, McWilliams's emphasis on empathy and cooperation sets her apart from more traditional party lines. Some of her progressive stances, particularly on women's rights and community

reconciliation, have sparked criticism from both unionist and nationalist hardliners.

Pearl Sagar



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, Co-Founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition

Pearl Sagar, a co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition alongside Monica McWilliams, is a prominent advocate for inclusive, nonsectarian politics in Northern Ireland. Since the party's formation in 1996, Sagar has called the NIWC with a focus on gender equality, community reconciliation, and social justice, aiming to ensure that voices traditionally excluded, especially women's, are heard in the peace process. She supports the inclusion of all democratically mandated parties, including Sinn Féin, in the peace talks, despite not endorsing their broader aims, and stresses dialogue over division. While she avoids inflammatory rhetoric, her party's progressive stances such as support for integrated education, women's reproductive rights, and engagement with all political actors have drawn criticism from across the political spectrum.

Progressive Unionist Party

Hugh Smyth, OBE



Positions: Leader of the Progressive Unionist Party (1979-Present), Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, Belfast City Councillor(1972-Present), Lord Mayor of Belfast (1994-1995), Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Smyth, a founder member of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), which was formed in the mid-1970s, is the leader of the party from 1979 to date. Under his leadership, the PUP attempted to represent the working-class loyalist community and was supposedly associated with the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a loyalist paramilitary organization. Being a staunch supporter of the peace process, he was the one to pool in the loyalists' support towards this very cause. After the IRA ceasefire in August 1994, he called on loyalists to "give peace a chance." In October 1994, the loyalist paramilitaries, such as the UVF, declared their own ceasefire. Throughout his various pragmatic acts and deliberations, he tried to tone down the massively violent struggle of the Loyalists. He was prosaic in his attempts to ask

the Sinn Féin to commit themselves to decommissioning such that the concerns of the Unionists would be appeased and they would be more readily involved in the governance process.

David Ervine



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, Member of the Belfast City Council.

Recognised as one of the most progressive unionists, Ervine, initially, was a member of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and was arrested in 1974, and found guilty of possession of explosives with intent to endanger life; being sentenced to 11 years in prison. While in prison, his views changed and he started to heavily favour a political solution to the Northern Ireland conflict. Thus, he became an advocate of political dialogue over violence, arguing that loyalist paramilitarism was not mindless criminality but a response to decades of social inequality, political exclusion, and discrimination. He supported inclusive negotiations and was open to engaging with Sinn Féin, insisting that meaningful peace required the involvement of all sides. Ervine rejected the notion that sectarianism was accidental, instead describing it as a product of state policy and generational division. He openly criticized mainstream unionists for distancing themselves from loyalism while benefiting from the very system that fueled conflict.

Social Democratic and Labour Party

The Hon. John Hume, MP



Positions: Social and Democratic Labour Party Leader(1979-Present), Member of the European Parliament(1979-Present), Member of Parliament for Foyle

During the 1960s, Hume became actively engaged in Derry community development. He helped establish the Derry Credit Union and the Derry Housing Association to address economic inequalities and housing needs. He was ardently promoting civil liberties through peaceful protests. Acknowledging the requirement of an organized political strategy to deal with civil rights problems, he and other unionist politicians formed the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in 1970 and espoused constitutional nationalism and non-violence. He staunchly supported an equitable power sharing framework with a view to economic liberalism through establishment of freeports, free trade centres and a centralised fund system to support activities of the trade unions and bring in increased standard of living through involvement of external European economies. Hume began clandestine negotiations with Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Féin, in 1988, hoping to draw the republican movement into the democratic fold. Although this was criticized, he insisted that

dialogue was necessary for peace. This led to the development of the Hume-Adams statement of 1993, which urged the Irish and British governments to take a holistic approach to peace talks. John Hume was characterized by his directness, and some of his remarks caused controversy. Hume believed that disarmament should occur during the negotiations and should not be a precondition.

Brid Rodgers



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for Upper Bann, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Upper Bann, Chairman of the Social Democratic and Labour Party(1978), General Secretary of the Social Democratic and Labour Party(1981)

Bríd Rodgers interest in politics led to her involvement in the civil rights movement as spokesperson for the Lurgan Civil Rights Association. With the formation of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in 1970 Rodgers soon became a member. She established herself in the hierarchy of the party within a short period of time. She had always been an advocate for peaceful and democratic

solutions to Northern Ireland's immemorial political challenges. She was a harsh critique of Sinn Fein's vicious assertion of the civil rights movement being about equality while they tried to achieve Irish unity by force. She has voiced for Sinn Fein to yield to democratic processes, including joining the Policing Board, highlighting building of trust across communities. She has emphasised on the need for parties to build confidence and establish transparencies amongst the varied demographics of separate communities, even at the grass root levels. She has been committed to peace and reconciliation and thus, has harshly critiqued the suspected links between Sinn Fein and the militant Irish Republican Army. Despite this, she advocates an all inclusive peace process, underlining her commitment to the official policy of the party.

The Hon. Edward Kevin McGrady, MP



Positions: Member of Parliament for South Down, Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for South Down, Member of Down District Council(1973-1989), Chairperson of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (1971-73).

Towards the end of the 1960s McGrady participated in the civil rights movement and immediately upon the formation of the Social

Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in August 1970 he joined the party. Within a short period of time he quickly established himself within the ranks of the SDLP and was to serve as its first chairman. Eddie McGrady, being one of the founding members of the SDLP was responsible to a great extent for its executive planning and coordination in its power sharing administration. Within the party itself he is one to be one of the senior figures to voice their scepticism over the discussions that were held between John Hume, then leader of the SDLP, and Gerry Adams, then President of Sinn Féin. He opposed any form of collaboration with the Sinn Fein and frequently ruled out electoral pacts with the Sinn Fein, stating that the Social Democratic and Labour Party could never collaborate with a party which condoned violence. Thus, he was also a skeptic of intra party politics and a critique of John Hume. He was solemnly pledged in his polity to constitutional nationalism and ideals of the SDLP.

Seamus Donovan McClelland

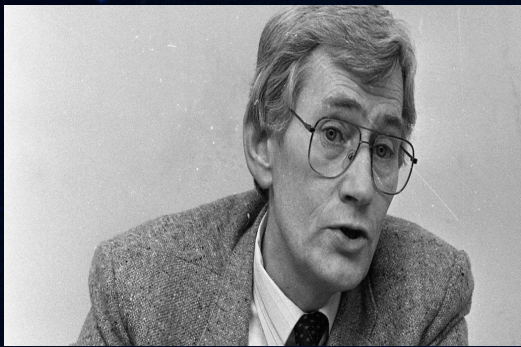


Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for South Antrim, Secretary of the SDLP Delegation to the Stormont Talks, Member of Antrim Borough Council (1989-Present)

McClelland is a prominent and active member of Northern Ireland's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). He was an SDLP representative at the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, formed by

the Irish Government at Dublin Castle in 1994. McClelland's political position was based on the SDLP's principles of non-violence, constitutional nationalism, and the achievement of equality and civil rights for all the communities in Northern Ireland. He promoted inclusive negotiation by stressing the need to have all groups around the negotiating table, including the formerly excluded ones. He believed that long-term peace was only attainable through mutual understanding, respect, and the creation of democratic institutions that accommodated the plural identities in Northern Ireland.

The Hon. Seamus Frederick Mallon, MP



Positions: Member of Parliament for Newry and Armagh, Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for Newry and Armagh, Deputy Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party(1979-Present)

Mallon was drawn into politics during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, where he protested against institutional injustices in housing, employment and voting rights. Mallon was made Deputy Leader of the SDLP in 1979, serving with party leader John Hume. Both leaders agreed that any viable political resolution had to involve serious participation by the Irish government. Mallon himself was



especially devoted to pushing forward a cross-border strategy for political reform. In 1982, Mallon was chosen for the new Northern Ireland Assembly for Newry and South Armagh. Again, according to SDLP policy, he refused to take up his seat, considering the Assembly to be too weak in powers and lacking an Irish context. Mallon continued to be a powerful presence, especially as the SDLP's justice spokesperson, where he called for fairness, accountability, and the reform of the law. He advocated greatly for peaceful, negotiated political change during the 1980s and 90s. He boldly and openly supported the Anglo-Irish Agreement as the only method and dogma of progress when the Unionists denounced it politically. Mallon was unshakable in his adherence to non-violence, civil rights, and political honesty. His own nationalist politics were rooted in social democracy and the common good, not in ethnic victory or cultural superiority. Mallon was a realist in his policy of inclusivity towards Sinn Féin in a political forum for deliberation. Simultaneously, he was cautious of their radicalist agendas. Mallon pushed greatly for public welfare, education and social development. He also stated plainly, "If you're not here to serve the people, you're in the wrong place," underlining his sense of duty and public service.

Ulster Democratic Party

Gary McMichael

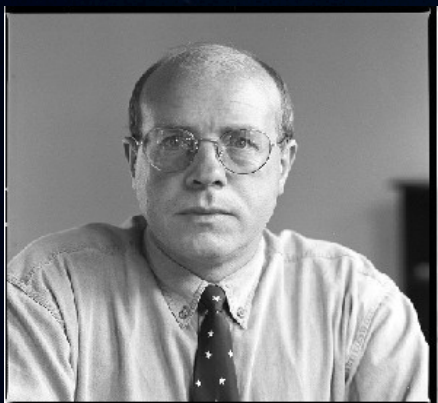


Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, Leader of the Ulster Democratic Party(1994–Present), Member of Lisburn City Council(1993–Present)

Gary McMichael, born in 1969, serves as the leader of the Ulster Democratic Party and delegate to the ongoing peace talks. As the son of assassinated UDA leader John McMichael, he represents an evolving strand of loyalist politics aiming for legitimacy through democratic engagement. McMichael's personal policy agenda emphasizes representing working-class loyalist communities and transitioning supposed paramilitary-linked groups like the UDP into legitimate political actors. A supporter of the peace process, he views the talks as essential for resolving deep-rooted sectarian conflict, though he maintains that all parties, including Sinn Féin, must meet strict conditions—chiefly, a ceasefire followed by a verifiable IRA decommissioning. He advocates engagement under ceasefire conditions but opposes any concessions to parties linked with ongoing violence. As a moderate loyalist, McMichael rejects both republican

violence and the inflexible stance of hardline unionism. His inclusion in the talks has drawn controversy due to the UDP's association with the UDA, though he has publicly distanced the party from paramilitary activity.

John White



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue

John White, born in 1950, is a delegate for the UDP in the Northern Ireland Forum and multi-party peace talks. A former Ulster Defense Association commander with a controversial past, including a conviction for murder, White now advocates political engagement for loyalists as part of the peace process. His personal policy reflects a commitment to channeling loyalist grievances into constitutional politics, emphasizing the need for inclusion of working-class voices long ignored by mainstream unionism. While supporting the current talks, he remains wary of perceived double standards, insisting that Sinn Féin must demonstrate a genuine break from the IRA. White supports inclusive dialogue under strict conditions but is not dogmatically opposed to republican participation if tied to



nonviolence and a ceasefire. After joining the Ulster Democratic Party in 1992, he along with the Progressive Unionist Party played a big role in convincing the Combined Loyalist Military Command to declare a ceasefire. Despite portraying himself as reformed, his past casts a long shadow, with nationalists and some unionists questioning his credibility. He is best described as a pragmatic loyalist. His statements often emphasize peace but can verge on defensiveness when addressing the legacy of loyalist violence.

Ulster Unionist Party

The Hon. William David Trimble, MP



Positions: Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party(1995–Present), Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for Upper Bann, Member of Parliament for Upper Bann (1990-Present)

David Trimble, elected UUP leader in 1995, is one of the most prominent figures in the peace process. Trimble commands both influence and scrutiny, initially perceived as a hardliner due to his controversial 1995 march with the Orange Order through Garvaghy Road; he has since taken a more pragmatic approach in pursuit of a peaceful settlement. Trimble's personal policy prioritizes maintaining the union with Great Britain while exploring a political framework that could stabilize Northern Ireland without compromising unionist integrity. Though wary of Sinn Féin, he supports conditional dialogue, subject to a cessation of hostilities and a subsequent decommissioning of weapons. His evolving stance has led some to label him as moving toward moderation, though traditionalists within the UUP remain skeptical. Trimble's participation in the talks is seen as a litmus test for unionist flexibility; he balances outreach with a need to assert moral and constitutional boundaries. His statements sometimes appear ambiguous—carefully crafted to hold together a divided party base.

Trimble's term as leader of the Ulster Unionist Party has, so far, been shaped by a marked resolve to bring a reconciliation between the two wings of the party.

David Brewster



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for East Londonderry

David Brewster, born in 1964, is a UUP representative for East Londonderry and serves on the party's support team at the multi-party talks. A lawyer by training, Brewster is a younger voice within the Ulster Unionist delegation, known for his methodical approach and commitment to legal frameworks. His personal policy aligns with mainstream unionist principles, stressing the importance of Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the UK and the necessity for democratic methods of dispute resolution. Brewster supports the peace talks as a means to achieve stability, but like many in the UUP, he remains skeptical of Sinn Féin's intentions, demanding clear proof of disassociation from IRA violence before serious engagement. He avoids polemic or inflammatory rhetoric and is generally regarded as a moderate voice within the party. Brewster's role in the negotiations, while less public than senior figures, is seen as technically valuable

and ideologically steady. He has avoided controversy and focuses on the procedural and constitutional dimensions of the talks. He is widely held to be a representative of the younger generation of unionists who supported cautious engagement without compromising on fundamental unionist position.

Reginald Norman Morgan Empey, OBE



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for East Belfast, Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

Reginald Empey, is a senior figure in the Ulster Unionist Party, known for his articulate and balanced political demeanor, Empey's personal policy focuses on preserving Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom while seeking a peaceful settlement that respects democratic norms. He supports the peace talks in principle but maintains that participation by parties like Sinn Féin is only acceptable under strict preconditions, like a ceasefire followed by decommissioning. Empey's stance is that dialogue is crucial, but legitimacy must be earned, not assumed. His approach positions him as a moderate unionist, open to compromise within a framework of law and order. He is not known for making incendiary remarks and

generally avoids controversy, preferring to work through structured political channels. Empey is viewed as a constructive, stabilizing presence in the UUP—a figure capable of navigating between the party’s hardliners and more reform-minded members.

The Hon. Jeffrey Mark Donaldson, MP



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum, Member of Parliament for Lagan Valley.

Jeffrey Donaldson, a rising star in the Ulster Unionist Party and Forum member for Lagan Valley has become known for his sharp political instincts and principled stance, Donaldson’s personal policy reflects traditional unionist values, emphasizing unwavering support for the Union and strong opposition to any role for republicans in governance without prior disarmament. He has voiced strong objections to Sinn Féin’s inclusion in the talks, arguing that its participation legitimizes armed struggle and sets a dangerous precedent. While not hostile to peace per se, Donaldson advocates a sequence where decommissioning precedes negotiations, rather than running parallel. His comments have occasionally stirred controversy within his party and the media, positioning him closer to the UUP’s

hardline wing. Currently, Donaldson is increasingly being seen as a torchbearer for the UUP's traditionalist faction—respected for his discipline and clarity, but sometimes criticized for rigidity. His future within unionism appears strong, though his stance may put him at odds with evolving dynamics in the peace process.

The Rt Hon. John David Taylor, MP, PC (NI)



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue for Strangford, Member of Parliament for Strangford(1982–Present), Member of Castlereagh Borough Council(1993–1997), MEP for Northern Ireland(1979–1989),Privy Council of Northern Ireland

John Taylor, born in 1937, is a senior Ulster Unionist and MP for Strangford, serving as an Ulster Unionist Party delegate to the multi-party talks. Known for his direct and sometimes provocative rhetoric, Taylor is firmly on the hardline end of the UUP spectrum. He opposes Sinn Féin's involvement in the peace talks until the IRA verifiably decommissions all arms. Taylor's personal policy is rooted



in traditional unionism, emphasizing Northern Ireland's unshakable position within the United Kingdom and rejecting any constitutional change that would edge toward Irish unification. A key critic of the inclusion of former paramilitary-linked parties, he frequently challenges the legitimacy of Sinn Féin, asserting that its involvement without clear repudiation of violence undermines the talks. Taylor is known for controversial comments, including suggestions that Irish nationalism poses a threat to British sovereignty in Ulster. While his bluntness resonates with hardline voters, it draws criticism for being inflammatory at times.

United Kingdom Unionist Party

The Hon. Robert Law McCartney, MP, QC



Positions: Leader of the United Kingdom Unionist Party (1995-Present), Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, Member of Parliament for North Down (1995-Present), Queen's Counsel.

Robert Law McCartney KC, leader of the United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP) since 1995 and MP for North Down, is one of the most vocal and uncompromising unionist figures in Northern Irish politics as of 1997. A barrister by profession, McCartney founded the UKUP to oppose what he viewed as the appeasement of republicans and the dilution of British sovereignty in Northern Ireland. His personal policy is rooted in a staunch defence of the Union, the rule of law, and a rejection of any constitutional arrangements that would, in his view, weaken Northern Ireland's place within the United Kingdom. As a member of the party's negotiating team in the ongoing 1996 multi-party talks, McCartney has maintained a deeply sceptical

stance. He considers the Sinn Fein politically illegitimate for as long as the IRA continues its paramilitary activities.

He has strongly opposed any form of negotiation with paramilitary-linked parties, arguing that this undermines democracy and rewards violence. A hardliner by all measures, McCartney is known for his fiery rhetoric and willingness to challenge both British government policy and mainstream unionism, particularly the Ulster Unionist Party, whom he accuses of making dangerous compromises. His insistence on preconditions for talks, such as full decommissioning by republican groups, has made him a controversial figure.

Conor Cruise O'Brien



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue

Donal Conor David Dermot Donat Cruise O'Brien, commonly known as Conor Cruise O'Brien, is a distinguished intellectual and seasoned statesman who is also a former Irish diplomat, writer, and Minister for Posts and Telegraphs in the Republic of Ireland. Cruise O'Brien is widely known for his uncompromising stance on terrorism and his belief in the primacy of the British connection in Northern Ireland. As

a member of the UKUP negotiating team, he supports the party's strict opposition to the inclusion of Sinn Féin in the peace talks while the IRA remains active, viewing their participation as a betrayal of democratic principles. His stance is deeply rooted in a belief in constitutional democracy, national sovereignty, and the rule of law, coupled with an intense scepticism toward republicanism, which he sees as inherently linked to violence. Though once associated with liberal intellectual circles, by 1997 Cruise O'Brien is currently aligned with a hardline unionist position, opposing what he sees as appeasement of terror. His views are considered controversial, particularly in the Republic of Ireland, where he broke from mainstream nationalist opinion by opposing any role for the Republic in Northern affairs.

Cedric Wilson



Positions: Member of the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue

Cedric Wilson, a delegate of the United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP) to both the 1996 multi-party talks and the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue, where he sits as a top-up candidate, is a



committed unionist voice in the political landscape of Northern Ireland in 1997. He is very close with the party leader Robert McCartney, Wilson upholds the party's firm stance against the inclusion of Sinn Féin in the peace process while the IRA remains active, arguing that engaging with parties linked to paramilitarism undermines democratic legitimacy and rewards violence, only open to inviting the Sinn Féin if the IRA declares another ceasefire. His personal policy centers around the unwavering defence of Northern Ireland's constitutional status as part of the United Kingdom, the restoration of law and order, and the rejection of any form of political compromise with republicanism. Wilson, like other UKUP members, is deeply sceptical of the structure and aims of the ongoing talks, viewing them as dangerously accommodating to nationalist and republican agendas. Firmly on the hardline end of the unionist spectrum, he opposes power-sharing with Sinn Féin and resists any dilution of British sovereignty. While not widely known for incendiary rhetoric, Wilson's unyielding opposition to the peace process as currently framed has drawn criticism from more moderate unionists and those supportive of inclusive dialogue.