

**THE NEW NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY  
ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY, WHIP'S OFFICE**

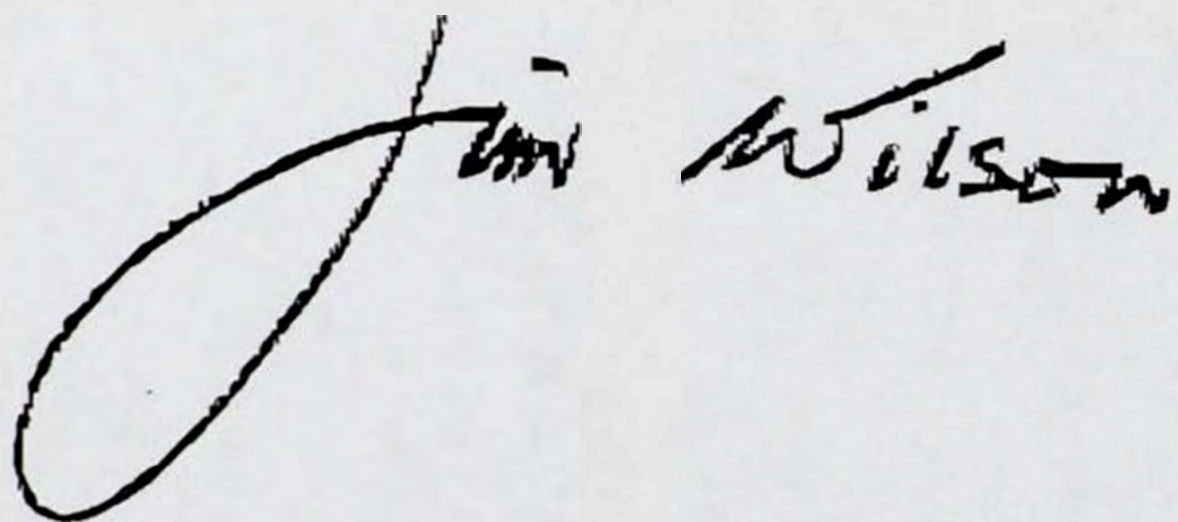
**MEMORANDUM.**

To: Gerry Gosgrove  
From: Jim Wilson  
Date: 20<sup>th</sup> October 1998  
Ref: NDI Programme.

Please find attached the draft agenda for the NDI seminar planned to run over the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November. NDI have a good reputation for their training programmes and the UUP appreciate the time and effort that has been put into the planning. We believe the programme will be a valued element to the Transition phase and so it would be a shame if it coincided with anything else.

I hope you will give this your best attention.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Wilson'. The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial 'J' that loops around the first part of the name.



**The Politics of Governing: Political Parties and the Northern Ireland Assembly**  
**National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)**  
**November 11-14, 1998**

D\*R\*A\*F\*T

## Agenda (draft 10/19/98)

D\*R\*A\*F\*T

**Wednesday, November 11**

6:00 pm	Welcome reception (tentative)
- 8:00 pm	Remarks: Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon First Minister David Trimble

**Thursday, November 12**

8:30- 9:00 am	Registration
9:10- 9:20 am	Welcome Remarks: Lord Alderdice, Speaker, Northern Ireland Assembly
9:20- 9:40 am	Program Overview: Sean Carroll, NDI Northern Ireland Program Director [Introduce seminar objectives, format and intl. experts]
9:45-10:30 am	Plenary Session I: <b>Political Parties and Legislatures –</b> Comparative Introductory Remarks: <i>Speakers:</i> Peter Hack, Member, Hungarian Parliament; Executive Board, Free Democrats Elizabeth Weir, Leader, New Democratic Party, New Brunswick; Member, Prov. Leg. Assembly
10:30-11:00 am	Tea Break
11:00-12:00 pm	Plenary Session II: Comparative Introductory Remarks (continued) Member, Belgian Senate Member, U.S. House of Representatives  Q&A / Discussion
12:00- 1:30pm	Lunch

The afternoon is organized into small group sessions with five political groupings rotating to four trainers covering four topics:

- 1) Party organization in the Assembly;
- 2) Party discipline (whips, consensus);
- 3) Blocs/coalitions: consensus and compromise
- 4) Constituent relations



On each group's break, they will receive a scenario/case-study to work on then or in the evening.

1:30- 2:15 pm	Small Group Session I (party groups 1-4, group 5 has break)
2:30- 3:15 pm	Small Group Session II (party groups 1-3, 5, group 4 has break)
3:30- 4:15 pm	Small Group Session III (party groups 1-2, 4, 5, group 3 has break)
4:30- 5:15 pm	Small Group Session IV (party groups 1, 3-5, group 2 has break)
5:30- 6:15 pm	Small Group Session V (party groups 2-5, group 1 has break)

### Friday, November 13

Friday is organized into individual party consultations, where trainers will cover a number of topics chosen by each party from the following:

- specifics on whipping procedures
- party resource allocation and management
- political communications
- constituency relations – casework
- committees
- structure of communications between legislative group and party HQ
- workload management
- managing party policy debates
- relations with party leadership
- role of opposition

8:30-10:15am	Individual Party Consultations [larger parties only – DUP, SF, SDLP, UUP]
10:15-10:30am	Tea Break
10:30-12:15pm	Individual Party Consultations [smaller parties only – Alliance, NIWC, PUP, UKU/UUAP – discussion hopefully to continue during lunch]
12:15-1:30pm	Lunch
1:30-2:45pm	Individual Party Consultations [larger parties only – DUP, SF, SDLP, UUP]
3:00-4:00	Closing Plenary Session: Wrap-up & Evaluation

5:30 - 6:00

### Saturday, November 14

9:00 10:30 morning	Consultative visits to parties' HQ and/or constituency office (to be arranged).
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- Sinn Féin /  
- SDLP conference  
- UUP security team





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## NDI PROGRAM IN NORTHERN IRELAND



The historic "Good Friday" Agreement reached on April 10, 1998 between the British and Irish governments and the political parties in Northern Ireland lays the foundation for peace after nearly 30 years of bitter sectarian conflict. Its centerpiece is the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly, elected in June following ratification of the Agreement by commanding majorities on both sides of the border. The Assembly will provide the primary forum for cross-community cooperation and consensus-building. In addition, the Agreement creates new institutional links within Northern Ireland; between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; and between Northern Ireland and other regions of the United Kingdom. It also contains measures on human rights, decommissioning of arms, release of prisoners, policing and other issues that have been sources of tension and conflict in Northern Ireland.

NDI has contributed substantially to facilitating dialogue between political parties and strengthening a nonviolent and democratic political

process in Northern Ireland since 1985 by providing party-building assistance to a widening circle of parties. In June 1994, NDI began a program to strengthen political parties and the practice of politics in Northern Ireland while examining issues of politics in a divided society. NDI organized an all-parties seminar (with the Frei Foundation) in the Hague in late 1994 at which the participants suggested that the South African negotiation process was a relevant model. In 1995, NDI conducted focus group research about the 1995 cease fire; however, in late 1995-1996, the end of the cease fire and a deterioration of political conditions made it impossible to proceed with activities.

In June 1997, in cooperation with the McCormick Institute at the University of Massachusetts, NDI brought together 27 leaders from nine Northern Irish political parties with more than two dozen of the South Africans who actually negotiated the historic transition to all-race elections and democratic rule. The program, which was conducted before the Belfast talks that led to the Agreement, was held at a secluded military air base in the Western Cape where participants took part in intensive meetings, isolated from all political distractions. South Africa's Department of Constitutional Development sponsored the program, dubbed by them an *indaba* – Zulu for a "gathering of the minds."

The South Africans described the challenges they faced in order to reach a "workable" negotiating model; establish parallel and complementary negotiating processes; and create mutually acceptable procedures and principles to guide their deliberations. The





program considered the relevance of these experiences to Northern Ireland. The South Africans examined "real life" situations where deliberations broke down, and actions taken to reconcile differences and resume the negotiation process. The participants developed a common understanding of the concepts and skills of negotiation necessary to identify common ground for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

*"Not a day goes by in the talks that a reference is not made to the South Africa experience. It was a turning point in our lives," said one Northern Ireland political party leader.*

On a recent visit by NDI to the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, political party leaders continued to describe their exposure to the South African experience as a vital component in reaching consensus during the talks.

In July 1998, NDI conducted a mission that shared the story of the Northern Ireland peace with political leaders from other parts of the world who are addressing issues of peace-making and constitutional accommodation in divided societies. Political and civic leaders from Guyana and Lebanon met with the primary players involved in the peace process in London, Dublin and Belfast to gain ideas for how to move forward in their own countries. At the same time, the fact that decision-makers from divided societies are visiting Northern Ireland provides encouragement, confidence and support to those involved in the talks and responsible for continuing the Agreement.

NDI plans to continue to assist political parties in the new Northern Ireland Assembly in the specific context of the evolving peace and reconciliation process. Given the historic opportunity presented

by the Agreement, the Assembly will provide the primary forum for cross-community cooperation and consensus-building while also providing to the people of Northern Ireland a regional legislature and government for the first time in a quarter century. The success of this effort and the stability of the peace will depend, in part, on a competent, responsive, transparent and accountable governing process.

*For more information on NDI's program in Northern Ireland, please contact Program Assistant Cathy Westley.*



**NDI Assessment Mission:  
Political Parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly  
Summary Report**

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) conducted an assessment mission to Northern Ireland from August 27 to September 3, 1998. Assessment team members included NDI staff members Patricia Keefe, Ivan Doherty and Sean Carroll and the former Deputy Legislative Director at the White House Susan Brophy. The central objective of the mission was to meet with key players on all sides of the political spectrum to acquire a better understanding of how NDI can assist the political parties in the new Northern Ireland Assembly. The team met with political parties, leadership and members of the new Northern Ireland Assembly, civil society groups, and representatives of the British and Irish Governments.

**Findings**

During the meetings, several areas of need were discussed. The most common themes, not surprisingly, revolved around the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the need to enhance the capabilities of political parties in the Assembly. A great emphasis was put on developing practical politics including effective decision-making capacities. The experts and practitioners with whom we met spoke particularly of the need for advice and technical assistance in the areas of:

1. Party organization and discipline, including developing the role of party whips and internal communications mechanisms in the Assembly.
2. Relations between party headquarters and party groups in the Assembly.
3. Resource management/allocation.
4. Political communication/public relations.
5. Policy development.
6. Civil society input.

Interlocutors spoke of the importance of working with some parties that are significant to the political process, but are not represented in the Assembly, and of the necessity for parties and other political players to focus on trust-building and tolerance in all future work. They also pointed out that programs outside of Northern Ireland – such as the program in South Africa last year, held in collaboration with NDI – help increase practical understandings of transition politics, including the development of governing institutions and of practices that engender trust-building.

**Proposed Activities**

NDI proposes to conduct two three-day workshops and one study mission to a third country (probably South Africa) on *Assisting Political Parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly*. These activities would occur in the period from October 15, 1998 to April 15, 1999 and are envisioned as the first step in a long-term program of assistance. The workshops will be a mix of plenary sessions and one to one consultations. Three or four legislators from traditional and/or transition democracies would be invited by NDI as expert practitioners to conduct the workshops



and individual party consultations. They will be individuals who have an interest and capacity to remain in contact with parties in Northern Ireland as appropriate for follow-up consultations. Workshop participants would be determined in consultation with the parties represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Presumably, participating party delegations would consist mostly or entirely of members of the Assembly. Separate sessions, however, could be held with party/Assembly staff.

The study mission would involve one Assembly member (possibly the chief whip) from each of the parties represented in the Assembly. The mission would be to a country that transitioned from a divided society to power-sharing arrangements in parliament, helping produce consensus-based politics and reduce political risks. An example of such a parliament is South Africa, whose transition to democracy was a result of a negotiated settlement that established a period of constitutional review and provisional power-sharing in the Government of National Unity.