

STRAND II: PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

Note by the British Government

- ◆ there is a need for a new beginning for relationships within Northern Ireland, within the island or Ireland and between the peoples of these islands
- ◆ there is a need for an agreement across all the relationships, which would enable people to work constructively for their mutual benefit, without compromising the essential principles or long term aspirations or interests of either tradition or of either community
- ◆ agreement on relationships within the island of Ireland, as with the other relevant relationships, should secure sufficient consensus among the participants and be acceptable to the people North and South, respectively. It should:
 - be based on the principles of consent and self-determination as expressed in the Joint Declaration
 - reflect the principle that the consent of the governed is an essential ingredient for stability
 - be pursued and established by exclusively democratic, peaceful means, without resort to violence or coercion
 - be based on full respect for, and protection and expression of, the rights and identities of both traditions in Ireland and even handedly afford both communities in Northern Ireland parity of esteem and treatment, including equality of opportunity and advantage.
- ◆ an agreement should reflect a balanced accommodation of the differing views of the two main traditions on the constitutional issues in relation to the special position of Northern Ireland, enabling this to be incorporated in changes to constitutional legislation in both jurisdictions
- ◆ new institutions and structures should take account of the totality of relationships and enable the people of the island of Ireland to work together in all areas of common interest while fully respecting their diversity
- ◆ new institutions and arrangements should afford both communities secure and satisfactory political, administrative and symbolic expression and protection

- ◆ new arrangements between Northern Ireland and the Republic should be:
 - such as to reconcile and acknowledge the rights of the two major traditions in Ireland
 - such as to encourage, promote and develop improved relations and better understanding within Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
 - conducive to a new spirit of cordial co-operation and friendship among the people of the island of Ireland, bringing a united effort for the common good
 - legitimate in the sense of respecting all the rights of the people of Northern Ireland and the people of the Republic of Ireland
 - legitimate in the sense of respecting the validity of both the nationalist and unionist identities in Ireland and the democratic rights of every citizen on the island
 - geared to the development of governmental arrangements that are widely acceptable and aimed at protecting and enhancing the interests of the people of the island of Ireland
 - widely acceptable in both parts of the island of Ireland
 - stable and durable
 - constructive and meaningful
 - capable of development, on an agreed basis, in response to changing political realities
 - workable, in the sense of being as straightforward to operate as possible
 - designed to provide a two-way channel of communication which would enable issues of mutual benefit or of concern to either party to the relationship to be addressed
 - innovative, in the sense of learning from and not merely modelled on any previous arrangements
 - conducive to optimising the benefits from the EU framework, and its programmes, for the two parts of the island or Ireland, consistent with the role and responsibilities of the UK and the Republic of Ireland as separate Member States

- conducive to ending terrorism, maintaining and advancing effective security co-operation, promoting justice and achieving lasting peace and stability.
- ◆ new institutions should be created to cater adequately for present and future political, social and economic interconnections on the island of Ireland, enabling representatives of the main traditions, North and South, to enter agreed dynamic, new, co-operative and constructive relationships on the following basis:
 - powers, functions, responsibilities and methods of operation should be agreed by the participants
 - they should operate only on the basis of agreement between representatives from North and South respectively
 - their terms of reference, once agreed by participants, should be mandated in legislation in the sovereign Parliaments
 - change to the remit should be possible, but only by agreement
 - they should operate within the principles of democratic authority and accountability operating in each jurisdiction.