

Confidential

14 October 1997

STRAND THREE - A NEW AGREEMENT

A Consultation Paper by the British and Irish Governments

Strand Three of the negotiations covers relationships between the British and Irish Governments.

The Governments, as signatories of Anglo-Irish Agreement, have made clear that, in the context of a comprehensive political settlement, they are prepared to consider a new and more broadly based agreement, if that can be achieved through direct discussion and negotiation between all the parties concerned.

While negotiations on Strand Three issues will be between the two Governments, the Governments are determined to fulfil their obligation to provide a meaningful role for the parties. In this spirit, they invite the views of the parties on the attached paper which raises some of the issues which could be the subject for discussion under the agenda adopted on 24 September 1997.

The issues in this paper cannot, of course, be fully resolved in isolation from the other issues involved in the negotiations as a whole. It is common ground between the participants that any agreement, if it is to command widespread support, will need to give adequate expression to the totality of relationships covered by the negotiations. The inter-relationships between different parts of the comprehensive agenda are, therefore, of crucial importance. Nonetheless, it is hoped that discuss of the issues raised in this paper will provide a useful and meaningful starting point to work in Strand Three.

The Governments wish to emphasise that their invitation to the parties to offer views on the attached paper is without prejudice to the right of the parties under the Rules of Procedure to meet and discuss Strand Three issues with the Governments. Neither does it affect the right of any party, under the Rules of Procedure, to raise any significant issue of concern to it and to receive a fair hearing for that concern. Furthermore, the Governments reaffirm their commitment to the provision in the Rules of Procedure that no outcome to the negotiations is either predetermined or excluded in advance.

Subject to the views of the Business Committee, the two Governments intend to convene a meeting under rule 40 as soon as generally convenient.

tion, reflecting the totality of relationships between the two islands, with the objective of seeing peace, stability and reconciliation established by agreement between all the people who inhabit the island of Ireland.

2. The Governments, who have already described a possible outcome in *A New Framework for Agreement*, would welcome the views of the parties on the principles and requirements which might inform and underpin any new Agreement. These might include:

the principle of self-determination as set out in the Joint Declaration of 15 December 1993:

the principle of consent in all its aspects; namely, that any change in the status of Northern Ireland should only come about with the consent of a majority of people there, that if a majority of people in Northern Ireland wished for a sovereign, united Ireland that would be given effect; that the consent of the governed is an essential ingredient for stability in any political arrangement; and that the aim of the negotiations is to achieve a new and lasting agreement which commands the consent of both unionists and nationalists.