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SUMMARY RECORD OF STRAND TWO MEETING - TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 1997 AT 10.00AM

CHAIRMEN: Senator Mitchell
Mr Holkeri

THOSE PRESENT: British Government
Irish Government
Alliance
Labour
Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
Progressive Unionist Party
Sinn Féin
Social Democratic and Labour Party
Ulster Democratic Party
Ulster Unionist Party

1. The Chairman (Senator Mitchell) convened the meeting and stated that the first item of business was approval of the minutes from 7 October which had been previously circulated. Following consultation with the participants it was agreed their approval be deferred until the next Strand Two meeting. The Chairman said that, with regard to the next meeting, the Business Committee had agreed that Strand Two would meet again on Monday 20 October. The only decision to be taken related to the start time. The Chairman proposed 10.00am and asked for comments.

2. The PUP suggested 12 noon and the Chairman asked for comments on this proposal. The SDLP said it wasn't in favour of this time. The nature of the work was such that all participants had weekly schedules to keep to, not only with the talks but with other commitments. It stated its preference for a 10.00am start. The Chairman asked the PUP whether it had a special difficulty on Monday. The PUP said it did have particular circumstances which gave rise to difficulties on that day and it hoped that its request could be reconsidered on a one-off basis. The SDLP said it always tried to be helpful in accommodating other participants who had difficulties, but many people attending the talks

had to drive considerable distances and they looked on an early start as hopefully leading to an early finish. Sinn Féin said it had no difficulty in adopting a spirit of accommodation but it also had to be borne in mind that everyone would be facing a heavy workload over the next number of months and there was provision for alternates to be used. The party said this might be considered in attempting to overcome next weeks difficulties. Given this Sinn Féin said it wished to commence at 10.00am. The party added that while it recognised individual difficulties as matters which had to be worked around, parties had to organise their own arrangements in line with the schedule of business.

3. The PUP said its main problem on Monday was that only one delegate would be available. The request for a later start was made since an early start would mean the party would not be represented at all. The Chairman said he would come back to the timing issue following further consultation with the participants during the day.

4. The UUP said it was content with this position but also wanted an opportunity to talk to the Chairman about other issues of scheduling. The party said that one of its senior delegates was not available on Mondays and it would therefore have difficulties with future Strand Two meetings being regularly scheduled for this day. The UUP said it fully realised that the Business Committee had recently met and set the current schedule but it believed that the Strand itself should have some powers of decision making regarding aspects of scheduling.

5. The Chairman asked the UUP whether it was suggesting that, after next weeks meeting, Strand Two should meet on a day other than a Monday. The UUP confirmed this. The Chairman then asked participants whether anyone had objections to returning to the original scheduling of Monday - Strand One, Tuesday - Strand Two and Wednesday - Strand Three. Alliance said this was a matter for the Business Committee. The Chairman said Alliance was correct in its view but he recalled that the scheduling of the first week of negotiations had come about as a result of discussions between the Chairmen and the participants, the outcome of which had then been brought to the Business Committee. The Chairman said he was trying to accommodate the request from the UUP by suggesting that

the original format could be kept to and if this was acceptable, he would convey this to the Business Committee.

6. The SDLP said these issues had already been discussed and a consensus arrived at. The party said the UUP hadn't exactly over-endowed the process with the presence of its senior delegates although if the intention was now to do so, with its proposal to avoid Mondays, then it (the SDLP) would agree to a change on that basis. The Chairman said all he was attempting to do, and had been doing for the last 16 months, was to reach an accommodation between the participants. He believed some success had already been achieved on this point and he was merely trying to get to a situation where Strand Two could meet on a Tuesday without objection.

7. Sinn Féin said that since the UUP was one of the largest participants, could it not be represented by senior delegates on any day of the talks? The party again said it understood the need to find an accommodation when individual circumstances needed to be addressed. But it said that the Strand Two meeting on Monday had been agreed by the Business Committee last week. Surely it was up to the UUP to reorganise their delegation for next week and beyond if necessary.

8. The Chairman said that there was no agreed schedule beyond the following week. No consensus had been reached beyond this and no preference had been stated on what day Strand Two should meet after next week. The UUP said it had different teams for different strands and would be represented by the appropriate senior delegates at the appropriate strand: Mr Empey on Strand One, and Mr Taylor and Mr Donaldson on Strand Two. If, however, the meetings were moved round from week to week, future planning and scheduling of diaries would prove difficult. The party said one had to remember that there were many other demands on its senior delegates and, consequently, it was only trying to get consistency. If the Business Committee could agree that one and the same day could be allocated to each Strand then this approach was good for consistency. The UUP said it believed it was trying to help the process by getting a pattern established. It didn't believe the process would be enhanced if meetings were regularly moved round and consistency abandoned.

9. The SDLP said it thought the UUP delegates on the Business Committee had argued against the approach of one day per strand per week. The Chairman said the whole issue was for the Business Committee and it would be settled there. He said he would convey the participants comments to the Chairman of the Business Committee. The UUP said it wished to repeat its view that future Strand Two meetings be held on Tuesdays.

10. Sinn Féin said the Business Committee had already met on the issue and it wouldn't meet again until Wednesday 22 October. It asked whether the current agreed arrangements were now going to be upended? The party said that if the Business Committee established a plan then that plan should be kept to as rigidly as possible. As regards the PUP proposal, Sinn Féin said this was only for a delay of two hours. The UUP proposal was for a complete change of day. Sinn Féin said that Strand Two should proceed as originally agreed. The Chairman confirmed the meeting on Monday was going to proceed on that day. As regards the scheduling of future meetings this was for the Business Committee to decide and he would pass on the UUP's request to the Chairman of the Business Committee. Following an inquiry from the UUP, the Chairman said he would announce the start time for Monday later in the day. The Chairman said he now wished to proceed to other business. He said each party had been asked to submit a paper on "Principles and Requirements" and those received had been circulated by the staff. The Chairman said he understood that participants in Strand One had held a tour de table with each providing a summary of their papers, rather than reading the full document, to enable a general discussion to be held during the meeting. The Chairman, on hearing no objection to a similar proposition for the conduct of this Strand Two meeting, then asked the British Government to commence the tour de table. This would then be followed by an opportunity for discussion and questions.

11. The British Government said it had only a few comments to make on its paper. The British Government said it hoped the propositions in it were ones that could command a large measure of acceptance among participants. They reflected that widely-accepted principle that the totality of relationships involving Northern Ireland needed to be

considered; they sought to address North/South relations in a way completely consistent with democratic principles, including the principles of consent and self-determination, and the need, which again was widely recognised, to show the fullest respect for, and give the maximum of protection and expression to, the rights and identities of both traditions. The criteria it laid down for new arrangements between Northern Ireland and the Republic were consistent with those principles. They were intended to point a way to workable and effective institutions under democratic control that, in tangible ways, would pursue the common good.

12. The British Government said if everyone could agree a set of principles along these lines, the process would have achieved another great step forward. It would demonstrate that everyone had a great deal in common; it would be a valuable foundation for addressing the specifics. The British Government said the work of carrying the process forward rested with the participants as a whole. Both it, and it was sure the Irish Government, would do all they could to facilitate agreement. But the essential criterion an outcome from these talks had to meet was agreement between the participating parties, or at least a sufficient consensus of them. It hoped that parties would work informally among themselves with a view to maximising areas of agreement, and confronting disagreement. The British Government said it was happy to be drawn into that if it was helpful, but the dynamic, here as elsewhere in the talks, must be for the participants as a whole to generate.

13. The Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs said he wished to take the opportunity, on his first intervention at these negotiations, of conveying his greetings to the other delegations whom he had met around the table and to those he looked forward to meeting. He said his thanks also went to the Chairman and his colleagues for their enormous commitment to the negotiating process. He continued saying that as many would recall, he was involved in the previous round of negotiations in 1991-1992. Although everyone did not succeed on that occasion, there was considerable progress achieved. The three stranded format on which those talks were based had been carried over, as had the concept of negotiations involving both Governments and the eligible parties.

14. The Irish Government said there were, however, a number of innovations and difficulties over the 1991-1992 talks which, it believed, gave everyone grounds for greater optimism and hope this time around. First, was the fact that as a result of the loyalist and IRA cease-fires, the negotiations were taking place against a background of peace. Second, and very importantly, the parties around the table represented almost the full range of public opinion in Northern Ireland. And thirdly the process had an expanded international involvement, in the person of the Chairman, Prime Minister Holkeri and General de Chastelain. The Irish Government said it would like to express its appreciation for the generous and active support of the US, Finnish and Canadian Governments, both in the negotiations and in respect of the Independent Commission. In short, there was now a democratic political framework, with cease-fires in place, within which the differences could be negotiated.

15. The Irish Government said that, along with other participants, it had responded to the Chairman's invitation to submit a paper on the "Principles and Requirements" that it believed would be necessary to secure an effective agreement on Strand Two issues. In producing these principles and requirements, it was not working in a void. It had available to it a series of documents, including the report of the New Ireland Forum, the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Downing Street Declaration, the Joint Framework Document and the final paper of the Drafting Committee of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation. Each of these papers had marked a stage in the evolution of a position which it believed could provide a basis for the lasting political settlement to which all aspired.

16. The Irish Government said those who had had the opportunity to read its paper would see that the very first principle which it had identified was "that all the people living on the island of Ireland have the right to peace, based on justice", and "that the most urgent and important issue facing the people of Ireland, North and South, and the British and Irish Governments together, is to remove the causes of conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions which have resulted". This was fundamental to the Irish Government's entire approach to agreement on the future structures to be negotiated in this Strand. The Irish Government said it would emphasise also that lasting peace, if it was to be achieved, could not be based on the assertion of the rights of one community over

the other. It had to be based on justice, parity of esteem and equality of treatment for all, including equitable treatment of the political loyalties and aspirations of each community. In particular it insisted that stability and well-being would not be found under any political system, now or in the future, which was refused allegiance or rejected by a significant minority of those governed by it.

17. The Irish Government said in its view, North/South institutions would form a crucial element of any agreement, not only because of the compelling economic justification which existed for them, but also because they would allow northern nationalists the chance to share with unionists the sense that their aspirations and identity were reflected in the governance of their home place. The principle of consent in all aspects was, of course, crucial to this exercise. It expected, therefore, that any movement towards reconciliation on this island would be achieved openly and with the support of both communities and of a majority in both parts of the island. The Irish Government said it looked forward to exploring with the Chairmen and other participants in the weeks ahead the various proposals which had been tabled on this and, indeed, all the agenda items in this Strand. The Irish Government concluded by paying tribute to the former Minister for Foreign Affairs for the work he had done over the years in the interests of peace.

18. Alliance said it wished to welcome the new Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and in doing so hoped that greater success could be achieved in the present negotiations than that which resulted from the 1991-1992 process. The party said that the background to the process was about hoping to achieve an honourable settlement for everyone involved. To this end and to underpin this position, Alliance said it wished to set down a number of basic fundamental principles on which agreement should be obtained. First of all the business of Strand One was not hermetically sealed from Strand Two. Secondly, any agreement emanating from the process had to be viewed from the position that all elements across the Strands had to be part of that agreement. Thirdly, the principle of self determination had to be recognised in both Strand One and Strand Two. There also had to be the principle of openness and accountability operating across all three strands with any new arrangements being based on respect, consent, democratic accountability, transparency and so on. Alliance said it had submitted one paper on "Principles and Requirements" because its

contents went across all three strands and it looked forward to raising questions and responding to queries as the discussion progressed.

19. Labour extended a welcome to the new Minister for Foreign Affairs and apologised for the absence of one of its delegates. The party said it had studied the papers from each party and these had shown how much diversity of view there was. Labour said this diversity was only natural given the range of political parties gathered round the table. The party said it, like Alliance, viewed the business of the three strands as inter-related. What happened in one strand had a bearing on what was agreed in others.

20. Labour said the objective of Strand Two was to achieve an agreement on workable arrangements for all the people of Ireland. The process in which everyone was engaged provided an opportunity to create structures for the mutual benefit of all on the island. The opportunity was also there to reach a mutual agreement between the parties and the two Governments and the people of the island. Labour said it would fully support any measures for institutions which really helped the people and gained wide acceptance from them. The party said that it firmly believed that the principle of consent should be enshrined within the negotiations and that whatever institutions were established, these had to be bodies which were democratically based, accountable, acceptable to the people of the island and transparent in their deliberations and decisions.

21. Labour said there was also a requirement for widespread trust to develop if the negotiations were going to have any chance of success. Mistrust of one another was no good; every participant needed to work hard to establish trust and confidence to help a solution develop. The party said if the people of Northern Ireland had the right to determine their own future then there was no reason for anyone to fear more practical contact throughout Ireland. Equally there was no excuse for failing to develop a peaceful, culturally "content" and economically prosperous island.

22. The NIWC said its principles were focused on the process itself, on reaching agreement, on institutions and on the transition and change required to move from the present position to any new settlement and beyond. In terms of the process itself the party

said that if the unionist and nationalist communities wanted agreement, then the participants should be prepared to go the extra mile to ensure that it was reached. The NIWC said that there had to be a commitment to work to win consent within the process, through sufficient consensus of all parties, and not simply the two major trading blocks which everyone recognised. The party said all were engaged on a shared project to put to the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and there had to be a commitment to a collective responsibility for any outcome and for being honest about the compromise on Northern Ireland. The sooner this was viewed by the participants as the only realistic way of proceeding, the better this would be for the process. As had been stated by the party in Strand One, honesty was also a key dimension in Strand Two and everyone had to think in terms of whatever was put on the table must accommodate workable and realistic proposals. There also had to be honesty in the relationship between Northern Ireland and Strand Two and an acceptance that change had to occur in the Republic of Ireland as well as in Northern Ireland.

23. The NIWC said change could be frightening but handling it was down to the process itself. But how was it achieved? The party said there had to be a willingness to address people's fear of change and assist in the leadership and management of change, rather than exploit fears for political ends. There was also the need to prepare the people for the referenda through the inclusion of them as far as possible in the dialogue in order to educate, inform and promote an agreed outcome on a common platform, not on an adversarial basis. The party said if the referenda were to work then this activity needed to begin now and this was a further principle which it espoused.

24. In terms of its principles on agreement, the NIWC said everyone had to strive to weave a web of relationships - between North/South, East/West and between regions in the islands. Such a web needed to be capable of winning the allegiance of all citizens and command widespread support. The party said that any agreement had to demonstrate pluralism and tolerance and be capable of giving expressions to a variety of identities and traditions. Such agreement had to go beyond the narrow confines of two traditions and preserve and enhance multi culturalism, though the party said it recognised that neither

Northern Ireland nor the Republic of Ireland presently viewed themselves as multi-cultural societies.

25. The NIWC said that any agreement had to address the economic and social synergy of the geographical island entity, while accepting the diversity of identities and traditions. The party said it was talking about the interests of the community and the ability to deliver real and measurable benefits in terms of economic and social development as well as deepening co-operation and mutual understanding. The NIWC said, put another way, this meant assisting the community from a position of self interest. The party said it recognised that the European Union also worked out of self interest and it was therefore important to realise that co-operation was relevant both in a cross border as well as on a regional basis. The NIWC said any agreement needed to look at and learn from intra-regional as well as cross border co-operation and should not be confined to replicating either existing, or previously proposed, models or structures.

26. The NIWC said there was an important need for everyone to be open and honest in reaching an agreement. Furthermore everything that was agreed needed to be stable. It couldn't be carved out of ice or concrete. If there was no flexibility then no accommodation would be achieved. The NIWC considered it was important to measure the degree of change and to that extent, monitoring and review systems would be essential to ensure that change was made. The party said something was required which delivered real and meaningful change. The NIWC stated that the recognition of the differing traditions would be achieved sooner than any equity based on gender, both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. The party said anything which was rooted in gender equity terms was also a principle. The process of agreement itself should have principles attached to it. The NIWC said, with regard to the transition period, that there would need to be one and everyone needed to be engaged in managing this. The party said there had to be management of immediate change arising out of any agreement as well as the management of further development and change beyond this.

27. The PUP said it was committed to the expression of opportunity for the future of all the people of Northern Ireland. It was keen to achieve the achievable within the

parameters laid down. The party said any accommodation had to be based on realism and it was not prepared to join with Sinn Féin to become one group saying "ourselves alone". The party said it recognised the importance and value of the East/West relationships as set out in its document. All these were central to the region which was the British Isles and it would be the British Isles model and not simply Northern Ireland which it would be promoting and investigating further during work in this Strand.

28. Sinn Féin extended a welcome to the new Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and wished him well in his new post. The party said it wished to commend to the other participants, page 7 of its "Principles and Requirements" paper, as a general summary of its position. The party said that any settlement must be of an all Ireland character. The establishment of a unitary state with de-centralised powers was the model it supported for a number of reasons. Sinn Féin said that unionists had to come to the realisation that the processes and government structures which had gone before had failed. There were strong, logical, economic and social reasons for Irish unity. A single currency and tax system along with other aspects of economic development such as electricity generation, tourism, agriculture, fishing and rural development could be advanced and improve the standard of living of all the people of the island. This all made sense if Ireland was a single region.

29. Sinn Féin referred to the PUP's remarks during the visit of the Prime Minister when that party (the PUP) had commented to the effect that the Prime Minister should go back to England and let elected representatives govern Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin said that it was looking towards a new Ireland, an agreed Ireland in a pluralist society. It was concerned with trying to improve the welfare and prosperity of people at all levels in the island and was committed to working out their future together with others. Sinn Féin concluded by saying it wished to raise some questions on the British Government document and was content to respond to questions from other participants.

30. The SDLP said its "Principles and Requirements" for Strand One were the same as Strand Two. There were, however, a few other points which it wished to make. The party said that both Governments, in the Joint Declaration in 1993 had pledged "to remove the

causes of conflict, to overcome the legacy of history and to heal the divisions which have resulted, recognising that the absence of a lasting and satisfactory settlement of relationships between the peoples of both islands has contributed to continuing tragedy and suffering". The SDLP said this was a joint pledge, made by two sovereign Governments, to get to the heart of the problems facing us. The party said that pledge should underline all the deliberations in all three strands. It said that those could of course be honeyed words but they could also be viewed as a absolute commitment to go to the heart of the problems. The SDLP said that if the pledge was honoured then this would assist the process and while participants had a role to play, it would be looking to both Governments to honour that pledge to go to the heart of the problems.

31. The SDLP referred to paragraph 2 of the Joint Declaration where the Governments had stated their aim to be "to foster agreement and reconciliation, heading to a new political framework founded on consent and encompassing arrangements within Northern Ireland, for the whole island, and between these islands". The SDLP said that both Governments had given a pledge that it was their aim to create, by agreement, a political framework encompassing the whole of the island of Ireland. The party said both of these were solemn commitments given in a public statement and it would be looking very closely at these as the negotiations developed. The party said it believed they would be honoured.

32. The SDLP said that in terms of its "Principles and Requirements" for Strand One, it had said that if Northern Ireland remained an entity, then equality had to be its status. The party said equality was something more than human rights or civil rights. It was the issue of equality of allegiance which needed to be addressed and this had to be taken forward in Strand Two. The SDLP said its proposals in Strand Two could not be viewed as items to be added on to institutions agreed in Strand One just to keep both it and Sinn Féin happy. The proposals had to be an integral part of the jigsaw, not an optional extra which was dependent on either Prime Ministerial or unionist party approval. This point had to be recognised above and beyond all other factors in the process.

33. The SDLP said it could argue about the island economy and other ideological aspects but the party was seeking something which needed to be in any agreement as of

right. The party said that it sought all Ireland institutions with executive powers from Strand Two. This was not something which could be played around with. If it was then, technically, one was playing with Strand One and in the interlocking mechanism on which the process was constructed; tinkering in one strand knocked down everything in the others. The party said there was no point in handing out platitudes. Its position was that if there wasn't a Strand Two with the type of institutions it had just identified then a Strand One agreement, which the party wished to see, couldn't be obtained.

34. The SDLP said there should be no surprises for unionists in that statement. They recognised the party's position in the negotiations. All Ireland institutions were nothing new; a Council of Ireland settlement had been brokered in 1921 and the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973, negotiated by the then unionist party and others, also provided a Council of Ireland formulation with much greater powers than those set out in the Framework Documents. The SDLP said it should be no surprise that that requirement for all Ireland institutions was present within the nationalist community. It had therefore to be dealt with in a serious manner.

35. The SDLP in conclusion said it believed the process could get to the heart of the matter. Everyone had to wrestle with the solutions to be able to turn things to their advantage. The party said it looked forward to the day when everyone was wrestling power from the two sovereign Governments and perhaps then all could truly say they had gone to the heart of the matter.

36. The UDP said it was under no illusion, having listened to the SDLP, that there would not be severe difficulties in Strand Two. The party said, above all else, it hoped that honesty would be displayed by all in the forthcoming discussions and as a result perhaps some agreement might be possible. The party said, however, that any cross border institutions would be anathema to it.

37. Continuing the UDP said that North/South cross border relations had been difficult as a result of both internal tensions in Northern Ireland as well as those between the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic. It was therefore clear that the parameters of any

North/South arrangement lay in the broader context of the British Isles. Crucial to any good co-operation were clear boundaries and guiding principles. Foremost, the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom had to be recognised. This status could only be changed if the majority of the Northern Irish people consented to such change. The UDP said that, at the moment, however, the people were being denied this right through the continued existence of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution as well as the imposed Anglo-Irish Agreement. Both had to be superseded.

38. The UDP said that any North/South co-operation and cross border institutions could only function if they were supported by the people and agreed to by democratic means. Therefore, any relationship with the Irish Republic had to be on an entirely voluntary basis. Moreover, in order to achieve maximum benefit for all, such arrangements could only be within the broader context of the British Isles as well as the European Union. The UDP said it had determined eight requirements and principles which presented the absolute minimum necessary for a functioning North/South relationship. These eight principles and requirements were essential for creating an atmosphere of confidence, trust, honesty and respect, and for good neighbourly co-operation.

39. The UUP apologised that one member of its delegation would have to depart in a few moments for another meeting. The party welcomed the new Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and said that he had a distinguished record and looked forward to working with him as the negotiations progressed. The UUP said it would consider the points made in each of the participants papers as the talks proceeded. It wished to place on record, however, that it didn't accept the present Anglo Irish Agreement as a basis for the present talks. These were new talks and were viewed by the party as a replacement to the Anglo Irish Agreement. The UUP said everyone had to understand this position. The UUP said it also rejected the Framework Documents.

40. The party said it did accept that co-operation should occur between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland but this had to be based soundly on mutual respect and recognition. The party said that between 1921-1973 the Irish had separated from the British nation and had pursued a republican/nationalist approach for nearly 50 years. After

1973 the Republic of Ireland joined with the United Kingdom in membership of the European Union and the last 25 years had seen the Republic and the United Kingdom embark on a period of coming closer together. Development of common fisheries and agricultural policies had occurred and some thought was beginning again regarding a common currency. There was therefore a coming together and the UUP said it welcomed this. What had happened in the last 25 years had been helpful in improving relations between both countries.

41. The UUP said that there were, however, problems and obstacles in Strand Two and the UDP had already referred to some of these. In particular, the UUP said Articles 2 and 3 had to be addressed as a matter of priority. The party said that while it supported the idea of co-operation, there had to be east/west co-operation in parallel with north/south discussions. It was the issue of the totality of relations which had to be addressed.

42. The UUP said it wished to see, as the NIWC had indicated, change taking place in the Republic of Ireland. The party referred to comments in the Irish Government's "Principles and Requirements" document and in particular the need "to achieve greater and more equally shared prosperity, the promotion of equality of opportunity, the eradication of discrimination and the improvement and inclusion of marginalised and deprived communities and groups". The UUP said that the state discrimination of minorities in the Republic would also need to be addressed in this context if proper relationships were to develop. The party emphasised that co-operation between both countries was acceptable to it so long as it did not weaken the Union or lead to the creation of a united Ireland. This was the reality which minority groups in Northern Ireland had to grasp. It also had to be emphasised that any new arrangements had to comply with the principle of consent and this meant the people of Northern Ireland alone.

43. The Chairman then proposed that a general discussion take place. Sinn Féin said it wished to direct a question to the UUP regarding the equality of treatment point which it had raised in relation to the Republic of Ireland. The party, in referring to the position of nationalists in Northern Ireland, asked whether this was a matter for the negotiations or the responsibility of the British Government? Did such matters need to be legislated for by the

British Government? The UUP said it did not wish to respond. Sinn Féin thanked the UUP for its response but now wished to know whether the party (the UUP) had tabled a paper on "Principles and Requirements" in Strand Two. The UUP said it did not wish to respond.

44. The Chairman said that his staff had informed him that the UUP had not submitted a paper. Sinn Féin then addressed the British Government on the same equality of treatment point and asked whether it (HMG) accepted that measures needed to be introduced to address this and a whole series of other matters (such as discrimination in employment opportunities for nationalists) and these were issues of national rights? Sinn Féin raised some other points. What was the British Government's position on the issue of self determination - was it for the people of Ireland alone to exercise this? Did the British Government believe that it represented an interference of this right? Did the British Government believe that its policy in Northern Ireland was an impediment to progress in the negotiations? Finally the British Government had spoken earlier of the role of the participants in the process. Was it including itself in this category or not?

45. The British Government said it would take the last point first. It said, in the context of the negotiations, that it was not a political party, but a Government. In this sense, Governments had to govern in a responsible and proper manner in Northern Ireland. The British Government added that it was an active participant in the talks but an agreement in Northern Ireland wasn't going to come about unless the parties in Northern Ireland themselves agreed this. The British Government said it obviously had an interest in achieving this but it was best that the parties in Northern Ireland and ultimately the people came up with a solution based on full agreement or consensus. The British Government believed it was also right for it to act as a leader towards supporting a settlement but it was right and proper for the parties to broker this; it said it couldn't impose a solution.

46. Sinn Féin asked the British Government whether it believed the current structures for governing the island were enforced. The British Government said it accepted that the people in Northern Ireland had to decide their own future. This was why the principle of consent was enshrined in the talks arrangements. The British Government said it believed it was important for everyone to understand that it was unwise to be imprisoned by history.

It wasn't the British Government's business to defend anything but the problems had to be discussed and an agreed solution found through dialogue and consensus and that was the only way change could come about. The British Government pointed out that since the May election it had embarked on a programme of reviewing existing governmental arrangements in the United Kingdom and had already held referenda in Scotland and Wales with further work planned in England. On the question of the timing of any introduction of change, the British Government said this was its responsibility. The British Government said that in terms of addressing the issue of discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland, the Fair Employment Act had attempted to go down that road at a time when it was felt right to do this. The British Government said that while it had the direct responsibility of governing Northern Ireland, it would continue to take decisions to ensure that proper and fair government continued. It was, however, for the talks process itself to focus on the problems and their eventual resolution. The British Government said that what mattered most was that an agreed outcome was achieved. It would continue to exercise its responsibilities in a proper and fair manner.

47. The SDLP asked, given the UUP's interesting emphasis on east/west relationships and the greater islands dimension, why had the party (the UUP) not put this vision into practice by becoming part of the British/Irish Parliamentary Body. The UUP responded, saying it could not participate in a Body created out of the Anglo Irish Agreement. The UUP said the Anglo Irish Agreement had failed. It had been negotiated behind the backs of the majority of people in Northern Ireland; had been imposed and was therefore not agreed. If a new form of agreement was achieved, the UUP said it would consider joining a Parliamentary Body at that stage. Until then, the party said it would not be part of an institution which propped up a failed Anglo Irish Agreement.

48. The SDLP said that in early 1986, the UUP had issued a political statement in which one requirement was the setting up of an inter parliamentary body. The SDLP asked was there not a contradiction in the position of the party in early 1986 with the stated refusal to join such a Body because of a failed Anglo Irish Agreement - itself signed in late 1985? The party said, on reflection, that it accepted the UUP's response as fairly comprehensive. Addressing the British Government, the SDLP asked whether (in the unique context of the

negotiations) it would agree that sovereign Governments had a wider responsibility in relation to solving problems which wasn't necessarily constrained by consensus. Was Government responsibility not above the need for consensus? Did the British Government agree with this view? If it did was it not therefore correct to make a distinction between a veto on Government policy and that element which was seeking consensus.?

49. The British Government said that one needed to be careful not to generalise too much but rather to think about individual circumstances. The British Government said it was its duty to put injustices right but that shouldn't deflect it from viewing matters as a consensus and not as a veto. The British Government said this exchange was more to do with a matter of the mind. What the participants should be focusing on was what tied everyone together rather than what divided people, in other words, viewing matters in a positive rather than negative light. The British Government again noted its role in governance and emphasised that it would not abdicate its responsibilities.

50. The SDLP said it wished to ask a question of the UUP and both the loyalist parties. The party referred to its earlier comments regarding equality of allegiance. It said since the UUP had earlier argued that the identity of the people it represented and sense of national allegiance flowing from this had compelled them (the people) to maintain links and relationships with Britain, did it (the UUP) accept that the sense of identity represented by nationalists compelled them to seek to establish and develop relationships with people in the rest of the island? Was this an acceptable proposition to the UUP and if not, how did that party address the problems of allegiance and identity?

51. The UUP said that in terms of identity and Britain, it didn't feel compelled to maintain links with the mainland. The party said that it was more a case of one being born a British citizen and this was not something that needed compulsion to maintain such a link. It was a desire; the link represented the embodiment of the state in which the party lived. The UUP recognised that nationalists in Northern Ireland didn't owe allegiance to Britain but instead looked towards an Irish identity within an Irish state. The UUP said, however, that the majority of the people in Northern Ireland continued to desire to maintain the link with the United Kingdom. It was not therefore possible to subsume the identity of the majority in

order to realise the alternative identity and allegiance of the minority community. This was ostensibly the basis for the principles of consent and democracy. The UUP said it wouldn't give up its right of citizenship so that others could have theirs.

52. Continuing the UUP said it did recognise that there was a significant minority who viewed Ireland as a single state. But the party said it took a wider view than this suggesting that Northern Ireland together with the Scottish, Welsh and English embodied a range of diversities within the British nation. The UUP said the recent developments on devolution were a recognition of that range of diversity which didn't undermine the integrity of Britain as a whole. The party said its desire was to have good neighbourly relations with the Republic of Ireland. There needed to be mutual respect and understanding between both countries but if all Ireland institutions were introduced in an attempt to create a united Ireland then the party couldn't go along with this. Such a situation did not represent the views of the people it represented.

53. The UUP recalled the Sunningdale Agreement and said it believed that some unionists involved at the time now regretted that final outcome. Some saw it as a "bridge too far" for unionism. The party recalled the SDLP issuing a statement at the time which led to the downfall of the power sharing executive. The UUP said that if the SDLP was indeed aiming to secure all Ireland institutions on the basis that these would lead to a united Ireland, it would oppose this. The will of the people it represented was to maintain the Union. The party could not accept anything other than this. The Chairman then asked for the views of the PUP and UDP to the SDLP question.

54. The PUP asked that participants refer to the PUP and the UDP individually rather than as 'the loyalist parties'. It said it shared the comments expressed by the UUP. It was inconceivable that they should diminish their national identity so that someone could feel better about theirs. The UDP agreed. It was not a question of maintaining the linkage between Northern Ireland and Great Britain so much as ensuring an accountable and democratic framework of government. The party said it sought to create good relations with the Republic, but in this they must be guided by reality. It was essential that there be co-determination in Northern Ireland for an agreement to work, and both communities must

subscribe to any outcome. The party said a substantial majority transcending the two main traditions wanted accountable government. There was no consent for a Trojan horse that would lead to an Irish confederation. They must accommodate the two traditions in a realistic fashion.

55. The SDLP, noting that the UUP had said it would not contemplate all-Ireland institutions with executive powers as it believed they would lead to a united Ireland, asked whether the UUP would contemplate all Ireland institutions with executive powers that would not lead to a united Ireland. The UUP said this was a matter that would have to be considered as the negotiations evolved. The context of North/South co-operation was important, hence their emphasis on the totality of relations. It said the Framework Document was flawed because it did not address this point, referring instead to the creation of an all-island framework, which did not recognise the totality of East/West relations. This relationship could not be addressed by an intergovernmental arrangement as envisaged in the Framework Document, such as the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The UUP said there must be a relationship between a new Northern Ireland Assembly and devolved institutions in the UK. It said the Scottish dimension was just as important in social, political, cultural and historical terms to Northern Ireland as the Irish dimension. The authority for any North/South co-operation had to rest with a Northern Ireland Assembly, and there could be no free-standing institutions with executive powers as these would be seen as an embryonic all Ireland government. This would be unacceptable in any context.

56. The SDLP said it seemed that the UUP actually agreed with the Framework Document on this point. The UUP replied that they had made clear their rejection of the Framework Document. The principle that authority for North/South co-operation should reside with a Northern Ireland Assembly was not in the Framework Document, which envisaged an all-Ireland body and the two Governments reserving over-riding powers. The Framework Document also referred to dynamic bodies and harmonisation of policy. This would lead to an all-Ireland government, to which the UUP was opposed. The SDLP noted that this particular issue had taken up a lot of discussion during the 1991/92 talks. The party suggested that if new institutions were formed in Northern Ireland and ministerial decisions flowed from these as well as from more widely based institutions on an all Ireland

basis, would this still not permit decisions to be taken in both types of institution? The party said surely this part of the Framework Document could be recognised by unionists.

57. The UUP said that these discussions were starting from a blank sheet. No-one was bound by anything previously agreed elsewhere, and each participant was free to put forward their own views. The PUP asked whether the SDLP had earlier implied that there would be no Northern Ireland Assembly if there was no agreement in Strand Two. It said the Council of Ireland had been agreed by the Official Unionist Party, which no longer existed. The Sunningdale Agreement had not been brought down by opposition to the power sharing Executive, but because movement in the direction of establishing a Council of Ireland was too fast. Despite widespread scepticism power sharing in the Executive had worked. Nationalist members of the Executive had worked hard in areas such as housing for all of the people of Northern Ireland. This would in time have become apparent to the wider population. The PUP was anxious that the mistakes of 1973-74 were not repeated, as this was the best, and perhaps last, opportunity to reach a settlement. It said North/South co-operation should be on a voluntary basis. It was only when the Council of Ireland was pushed that the Workers' Strike had brought the Executive down.

58. The PUP defended the right of anyone to argue democratically for a united Ireland; at the same time it would argue that the union was the best option for Northern Ireland. Success, however, could only be achieved if people were prepared to be realistic. People should forget about the idea of a united Ireland until such a time as they decided in its favour. The party criticised Sinn Féin for asserting that unemployment was a particular problem for the nationalist community alone. It affected everyone, and discrimination in the work place was to be found on both sides. The party said Protestants had been made to believe they were first class citizens in the past, and had believed it. Catholics had been made to believe they were second class citizens, and had believed it. What neither had realised was that they were all third class citizens. Now it was time to do something about it. The PUP wanted to see power devolved. For reasons different to those of the nationalist parties, it wished to see decisions taken out of the hands of British Government ministers. It needed a devolved administration to take decisions affecting life in Northern Ireland for, ultimately, it was Northern Ireland politicians who were answerable to the

electorate. The PUP said that the concept of power sharing had been advanced at the Constitutional Convention, but this had failed because opponents were able to raise the spectre of the Council of Ireland. This lesson needed to be heeded.

59. The SDLP asked whether the PUP was implying that it was necessary for nationalists to forego their sense of allegiance and ideological commitment before being permitted to become part of the political system. It said that such a notion lay at the heart of the problem in Northern Ireland. It stressed that there was a need for equality of allegiance in Northern Ireland for the nationalist community; its absence had led to 27 years of war and produced the alienation that preceded it under the Stormont regime. This was the crux of the matter. People had to try to understand each other and recognise parity of allegiance. The party said that it had been split over the Sunningdale Agreement when the Council of Ireland had been postponed, but it had stuck with it in order to save power sharing. In spite of this, unionist opposition still brought the Executive down. It denied that a statement by a party member had been responsible for the Executive's downfall. It was necessary somehow to get to a situation in which each tradition could express its political and ideological aspirations.

60. The SDLP said there was no denying the relationship between the two islands. It accepted that unionists felt a deep allegiance to Britain, though it was unable to understand it. But unionists had to recognise that the nationalist community also had political requirements. It asked whether participants could imagine the negotiations ending without Strand Two catering for parity of allegiance. Sinn Féin said this was an interesting debate. It asked the British Government whether the consent of both the nationalist and unionist communities was needed. It said nationalists had not given their consent to the present situation, and asked the British Government whether it accepted that the status quo was no longer an option and that there was a need for fundamental change. The party observed that the British Government said it did not envisage a leadership role for itself in the negotiations. It contended that since 1985, and with the publication of the Downing Street Declaration and the Framework Document, both Governments had performed a leadership role. The party believed it was an unusual stance to adopt as the negotiations entered a crucial stage.

61. Sinn Féin asked the UUP why it had not submitted a paper on “Principles and Requirements” for Strand Two, and whether it intended to do so. Citing both parties’ visit to South Africa, it asked the UUP whether it accepted the Rules of Procedure. Citing paragraph 16 of the Rules, it asked the party how it intended to engage in the negotiations in good faith if it was not prepared to speak to them.

62. The British Government said it was clear that the status quo was not an option. Change in the way government was delivered was inevitable. It said eight million people in Scotland and Wales had already decided in a democratic plebiscite to change the way they were governed. This would be followed soon in London, and after in the English regions, along with reorganisation of the House of Lords. Sinn Féin asked whether this would extend to the north of Ireland. The British Government replied that it would. The Secretary of State had made this clear - change in governing was as applicable in Northern Ireland. Responding to Sinn Féin’s second question, the British Government said it was giving a lead, citing the visit to Belfast the previous day of the Prime Minister. It said it was up to the participants to take responsibility; the British Government’s leadership lay in encouraging and persuading people to come together to reach a settlement. It was vital that the Government avoid being perceived as imposing a settlement.

63. The UUP said it wished to clarify its position in the negotiations. It had no confidence that the IRA/ Sinn Féin delegation was committed to the principles of democracy and non-violence. This was clear from the indictment it had tabled in September. Observing that confidence building was one of the central aspects of the Mitchell Report, it said it was up to Sinn Féin to build confidence by way of a start to decommissioning. Until that time the UUP was not prepared to engage in a discussion which would legitimate what it regarded as a non-constitutional party that was not committed to exclusively peaceful means. The onus was on Sinn Féin to change that perception.

64. Sinn Féin welcomed this engagement, and stressed its total commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence. It said the two Governments and the other participants, including other unionist parties, had accepted its bona fides. The best way to

resolve the differences was by talking. There was considerable support for the negotiations, and the party hoped that young people coming to the fore in political parties could reach a settlement. The party observed that time was short, and appealed to the UUP to recognise the need to talk to Sinn Féin.

65. Alliance welcomed the comments by the British Government about its role. It said the two Governments could not impose - it was for the parties to agree. It was critical of Irish nationalists who looked to the British Government for a solution, stressing the need for a dynamic among the parties. The party cited paragraph 18 of Sinn Féin's paper, and asked whether this was an acknowledgement of a unionist veto.

66. Sinn Féin replied that, in British constitutionality parliament was sovereign. British jurisdiction in the north of Ireland rested in an act of parliament and, accordingly, could be terminated by parliament. The British Government could hand over jurisdiction to the Irish Government tomorrow. The party said that Irish republicanism had always been about the unity of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. Ireland was only disunited 70 years ago; before that it had not been a question of Irish unity but of Irish independence. There must be no unionist veto, but the views of unionists must be heard in a new and agreed Ireland. It said there was no contradiction in paragraph 18.

67. Sinn Féin said it had always regarded the 'Irish question' as the 'British problem'. It noted that the PUP had said it was inconceivable for them to give up their British citizenship so that nationalists could feel better about their identity, and asked participants to reflect on what this meant. It also referred to the PUP's assertion that they should seek to achieve the achievable, and dare to be accommodating on a realistic basis. The party wondered what message the UUP's refusal to speak to Sinn Féin was sending to those who had voted for Sinn Féin. It believed IRA guns were being used as an excuse not to talk to Sinn Féin whereas the right of other sections of the community to hold weapons went unchallenged. Sinn Féin said the UUP was not engaging with the SDLP or the two Governments. It observed that the six county statelet had not worked, and wondered what message was going out to the people of Derry, South Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone. What about their equality? The party noted that the British Government could go ahead

with a bill even if it encountered opposition in the House of Commons. It said it did not blame unionists for wanting to hold onto the Stormont regime. If the British Government had not taken a lead in the past they would still have the B-Specials, the UDR and the Special Powers Act. Sinn Féin said the British Government could easily take action on an equality agenda. It cited a 1973 report on discrimination and said the British Government could have taken action then. It was repugnant for nationalists in the professions to work in public buildings with symbols of the crown or the British flag, and asked the British Government to look at this issue. Sinn Féin stressed the essence of equality of treatment and asked how unionists could persuade non-unionists about equality if they did not set an example themselves in the talks.

68. Alliance said it was debatable whether the British parliament could so easily dispose of Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin cited the example of Hong Kong. Alliance said this was different but, even if it were possible, questioned who would want this. Referring back to the Sinn Féin paper, it asked if unionist agreement was both essential and compulsory and, if so, how were nationalists to convince unionists? Sinn Féin said it was nonsense to suggest that they did not want unionist participation. Alliance asked whether unionist consent was required, to which Sinn Féin countered that no-one had a right to a veto. Alliance asked if unionist agreement was compulsory. Sinn Féin said that if unionists did not want to be involved, the problem would go back to the governments for resolution. Alliance asked if Sinn Féin believed the Irish people, as they had described them, had a right to consent to the way they were governed, to which Sinn Féin replied in the affirmative. When Alliance asked what would happen if that consent was refused, Sinn Féin said it would be up to the two Governments. For the last 30 years the unionists had exerted a negative power of a veto. Alliance asked if this meant the governments must impose a settlement. Sinn Féin said governments must govern, citing examples such as health issues. The party said unionists had wielded power for 50 years and had not tried to include anyone. For the past 30 years they had sat on their hands. Consent was a two way street and there should be no vetoes. Sinn Féin called on the UUP, PUP and UDP to seek their consent and to persuade them. It said the only way to convince the people Sinn Féin represented that they would be treated as human beings in the future was to deal directly with Sinn Féin in the talks.

69. Alliance agreed - it was up to each party to convince the others without any outside imposition. Sinn Féin asked what it regarded as outside. Alliance said 'outside' was Sinn Féin's term, which Sinn Féin denied. Alliance said it regarded Northern Ireland as a distinct entity, and Sinn Féin agreed that it was indeed distinctive.

70. The PUP recalled that Sinn Féin had said it would not become involved in point-scoring, but observed that it had been doing just that. By 'achieve the achievable' it meant don't attempt the unachievable. The party repeated that it was inconceivable that it should diminish its nationality to suit others. This would not solve the problem, merely reverse it. It suggested they seek to transform the difficulty as it believed a resolution was a long way down the road. They must each acknowledge their responsibilities. The PUP criticised Sinn Féin for expecting the British Government to persuade the parties to act in a way that Sinn Féin wanted, but not in a way that other parties might want, and commended the British Government for its answer regarding its leadership role. It said there was no inconsistency in its statements.

71. Sinn Féin asked the PUP what 'achieve the achievable' meant. It had not been referring to constitutional issues, but to the SACHR report, to the Garvaghy Road, to unemployment and to the lack of legal status for the Irish language. It said Irishness, as distinct from nationalism, had no ethos or presence in this state. Passing over worthy phrases, it asked exactly what was achievable on equality issues

72. The PUP said these issues were best dealt with individually, one at a time. It was achievable to discuss and debate them and then to reach a resolution with respect to each one. It said it understood Sinn Féin's impatience - it could be impatient too, often in response to actions by the DUP and UKUP in the past. The negotiations were just beginning, and it said Sinn Féin should not blame others if they were not progressing at the speed Sinn Féin desired. These issues could not be dealt with generally. First they had to build the trust that was necessary if they were to reach agreement, and the PUP expressed the hope that this would not take too long. The PUP said it did not expect Sinn Féin to believe this, and that this was one of the problems of trust that had to be addressed.

73. Sinn Féin said it was not a matter of impatience or speed. It asked why parties were not prepared to state their position on individual issues if they had already given thought to them. In this case they were back to the Governments. Noting that the SACHR report contained almost one hundred recommendations, Sinn Féin asked whether the British Government would wait for the unionist parties, or whether it would govern by implementing these recommendations, asserting that such a course would not constitute imposition.

74. The PUP said the issue of Government governing was clear. Participating parties must learn to trust and rely on each other, and debate the issues. The party said others might be surprised that they had thought about a whole range of issues. They should listen to each other's arguments, discuss them and then hopefully come to an agreement. It said it was surprised at Sinn Féin's lecturing tone. On a procedural matter, the UDP called the chair's attention to paragraph 16 of the Rules of Procedure. It was up to each party to decide how and with whom they would engage but to do so via the chair. This had not been happening and they were in danger of wasting time. They should step away from point-scoring and examine the issues as presented.

75. The SDLP said two crucial factors were emerging. The first was whether moves to satisfy nationalists regarding equality of allegiance were automatically to the disadvantage of unionists. The party believed that this was not the case, stating that nationalism added to unionism. The second was whether moves to satisfy the nationalist community regarding its equality, identity and political views had to be mediated by unionist approval. If this was the case the process would never get away from the corrosive concept that what was good for nationalists was somehow bad for unionists. Instead they must challenge this concept.

76. The SDLP said ultimately the only strength that unionism had was the strength of its relationship with nationalists, observing that neither community was going to go away. It believed the real protection of each lay in their relationship. They must face geographical facts and move away from notions of acceding to, or conceding to, demands from the other community. Alliance said individuals or groups that felt insecure in themselves were

unlikely to be generous towards recognising the needs of other groups. They must accept that all felt insecure, that all were part of the process and that a solution must be acceptable to all. The SDLP did not dispute this, though it said there was a difference between political negotiations and group therapy. Alliance said the negotiations involved groups made up of individuals.

77. The SDLP said it had touched on crucial issues of identity and allegiance. The party was disappointed with the essence of the UUP response. The party said unionists could address positively issues of nationalists' identity, but not issues of their allegiance, with which it seemed the unionists had serious problems. The SDLP referred to remarks the UUP had made about Ireland and Britain coming together as members of the European Union. It reminded the UUP that this was part of a wider co-operation across a range of issues in the EU involving the other member states as well. The SDLP believed the EU represented the emergence of another form of allegiance, and noted that these two senses of allegiance could coexist and find expression through political institutions. The party said the old nation state sense of allegiance was exclusive and could not be multi-dimensional. They should reflect on the wider sense of allegiance, as represented in the EU context, for example. This would make it easier for unionists to understand the requirement for expression of the nationalists' sense of allegiance, cast in an all Ireland framework.

78. The UUP said it was necessary to gain the allegiance of both traditions for any settlement. This was what was meant by sufficient consensus, which all had agreed to in the Rules of Procedure. The party recognised that an exclusively one-sided agreement would not earn both side's allegiance. The party said the point it had been making was that an all Ireland framework flew in the face of the developing British Isles and EU frameworks. The Framework Document consisted almost exclusively of an all Ireland framework, and the only concession to an East-West dimension lay in inter-governmental relations. It was important to set North/South relations in their proper context. An exclusive North/South context would not give adequate expression to the unionist sense of identity and allegiance. The process should work towards a wider British Isles framework, with greater emphasis on the totality of relations, especially an East/West axis. An inter-governmental level only would not adequately address this totality. The UUP was not saying no to

North/South relations - it recognised and wanted more co-operation, to give expression to the Irish nationalist identity. But nationalists must recognise that if the island of Ireland was the only framework for co-operation, this would deny the validity of an identity which saw both islands as its point of reference. The UUP said they could not be immune to developments in Britain, nor to changes brought about by EU membership. Both states were working together in the EU framework and this had helped relations between the two countries. The totality of relations must be reflected in the talks and in any agreement. Any new institutions must reflect this in order to give recognition to the unionist sense of identity and allegiance.

79. The UUP asked the SDLP whether Irishness could only be fulfilled in the context of united Ireland, or whether it could be provided for in a broader context. The SDLP said the UUP response had been quite helpful. It said its submission showed that it was very aware of the wider context, and the discussion had roamed across all of the relations. In its paper the SDLP had addressed the totality of relations, the EU dimension and the international dimension. The party said its submission of the previous week indicated its awareness of the totality of relations, and that the essence of Strand Three was East/West relations. It said Irishness could be fulfilled in many different ways, most of all through agreement between the two major traditions. The SDLP said allegiance was multi-faceted these days, encompassing the local, regional, national, continental and international. It was necessary to provide expression for this, and there was no neat or precise answer.

80. The NIWC said participants had begun to get some agreement on principles. It noted the PUP's comments about fear of change, and said they would all have to become accustomed to change but without fearing it. The parties should take a lead, as would the Government on issues such as SACHR. The NIWC expressed the hope that one day there would be no need for a body such as SACHR. It questioned how they were to engage properly if they would not engage with each other. The NIWC spoke of mutuality of interest, rather than an either/or choice. It said many people carried a British passport though they regarded themselves as Irish. There was an interdependence between the two: they must draw from both their Britishness and their Irishness. The NIWC said that participants appeared to agree on the need for co-determination in Northern Ireland.

81. Upon hearing no further requests to speak, the Chairman proposed that the meeting adjourn. He asked participants to consider a number of propositions ahead of the next meeting: did participants still agree to go through the whole agenda without trying to reach agreement on each item? Should they continue at the pace of one item per week, or was it feasible or preferable to combine some of the items? He also asked the participants if they wished to continue with the option of voluntary submission of papers in advance of meetings.

82. The Chairman referring to the earlier discussion said it had been his practice to accommodate all of the participants where possible with regard to the timing of meetings. Because the PUP had a difficulty with next Monday morning, he proposed to start the meeting at 11.30. Hopefully after next week it would be possible to agree a regular day and time for meetings of Strand Two, and he would ask the Business Committee to set a schedule for the foreseeable future. The meeting then adjourned at 13.15 until Monday 20 October at 11.30.

**Independent Chairmen Notetakers
17 October 1997**