

Points on the British Strand One Proposals

- We believe that the proposals are unworkable and fail to provide a satisfactory basis for responsibility sharing between the communities.
- The Proposals fail to come to terms with the need for collective responsibility. The suggestion of a "Liaison Committee to bring together the Assembly Secretaries of the department committees" is far too weak.
- Our view is that the primary function of the new institutions must be the promotion of a new partnership between unionism and nationalism. These arrangements contain no real evidence of this or of the promotion of a common purpose among those who will have an executive function, i.e. the Secretaries of the committees. Preparation of the budget is not enough.
- Without a central executive body with collective responsibility, the relationship between the Secretary and the rest of the Committee is unclear. There is tremendous scope for confusion. The paper fails to spell out the source of the Secretary's authority within the new institutions. If he/she is not acting on the basis of collective responsibility in an executive type body, then he/she must be acting under the control of the committee. Since each committee will have a unionist majority, there is no real sharing of power between the two communities. If on the other hand, the Secretaries can act on their own authority, the concept of democratic control has been lost.
- While the proposals envisage a Chairperson for the executive body there is no mention of a Deputy position. In a divided society like Northern Ireland there is a need to ensure that both communities are represented at the highest level.
- In the paper there is no reference to the North/South body, a vital interest for nationalist parties. It is essentially ignored apart from a general reference to

relations with other institutions.

- There is a reference to the Assembly drawing up a code of Practice. Nationalists would prefer to have the major requirements for those holding office, including a duty of service, spelt out clearly beforehand in legislation.
- There is, however, a genuine attempt though the use of weighted majorities to try and include safeguards against one community dominating the other, although the level of weighted majority levels need to defined. We would prefer the use of sufficient consensus throughout.
- There is a need for the institutions, including the executive, to be founded on Westminster legislation as the source of its authority. The British proposals do not address this issue.