

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

A paper by the British Government, relevant to all three Strands

1. If a comprehensive settlement is achieved which addresses all the relevant relationships there would need to be co-ordination between whatever structures emerge from discussions in each of the Three Strands. What follows is written on the assumption that, under a comprehensive agreement, new political institutions would be established within Northern Ireland, new structures would be established to give effect to new relationships within the island of Ireland and new or revised arrangements would be made to cater for relationships between the peoples of Great Britain and Ireland and their respective Governments. For the sake of convenience and to simplify the drafting of this paper those institutions are described respectively as an Assembly, North/South institutions and East/West institutions. Whether such institutions materialise, and what functions and name they might be given remains, of course, a matter for negotiation.

2. It is clearly the case that any relationships between new institutions will ultimately depend on the detailed constitution and functions of those institutions. What follows is therefore necessarily speculative until the nature of new institutions which might be agreed in the three strands becomes clearer. This paper should be read in conjunction with the other papers already tabled by the British Government in the three strands.

3. Without being prescriptive, relationships might be established across the three strands to allow for the following exchanges:

- between an Assembly and the British Government on matters for which the Assembly is responsible but which also have implications for the continuing responsibilities of the British Government; and vice versa
- between an Assembly and the Irish Government on matters outside the responsibility of the North/South institutions, but which affect Northern Ireland

- between an Assembly and the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, or other regional structures in Great Britain, covering matters of mutual interest, in so far as these fall outside the scope of the East/West institutions
- between an Assembly and the two Governments in the East/West institutions, where issues affecting Northern Ireland are being considered (either where they are the responsibility of the Assembly or the British Government)
- between the North/South institutions and the British Government on matters for which the Assembly is responsible, where they have implications for the continuing responsibilities of the British Government
- between the North/South institutions and the European Union, on a basis consistent with the role and responsibilities of the UK and the Republic of Ireland as separate Member States. And between the Assembly and the European Union.

4. The exchanges could take place for different purposes including the following:

- to exchange information
- for the purpose of consultation
- to co-ordinate decisions or action.

5. Exchanges could also take place:

- by invitation only
- by conferral of a right of attendance
- on an observer basis only.

6. It would be for discussion and negotiation between all the participants as to the character of the exchanges that were relevant in any particular situation.