

(29 September 1992)

STRAND 2: POSSIBLE INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Paper by Her Majesty's Government

1 This paper suggests the important issues which participants will need to address in considering possible institutional arrangements in Strand 2.

Principles

2. Part of agenda item 9 is consideration of 'principles to govern any such arrangements'. Under agenda item 6 the Committee has already debated some of the general principles which might underlie any arrangements made to remedy the perceived lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation between the two parts of Ireland.

3. Its report to plenary of 11 September, which was subject to a general reservation from the UDUP, offered some general principles for consideration. Without being exhaustive, these suggested that channels of communication and co-operation between North and South should be:

such as to reconcile and acknowledge the rights of the two major traditions in Ireland represented on the one hand by those who wish Northern Ireland to remain as an integral part of the United Kingdom and on the other hand by those who are of a different view and who aspire to a sovereign, united Ireland achieved by peaceful means and through agreement;

such as to encourage, promote and develop improved relations and better understanding within Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;

conductive 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 modeled on any previous arrangements;

conducive to optimizing the benefits from the EC framework, and its programmes, for the two parts of the island of Ireland, consistent with the role and responsibilities of the UK and the Republic of Ireland as separate member states.

During the Committee discussion on 23 September, the Irish Government proposed a further principle:

conducive to ending terrorism, maintaining and advancing effective security co-operation, promoting justice and achieving lasting peace and stability.

4. Participants may wish to bear these principles in mind in considering and assessing specific proposals for institutional arrangements.

Scope for Co-operation

5 The British Government's paper of 22 September, "Scope for Enhanced Economic and Social Co-operation" provided a brief summary of existing co-operation on economic and social matters and illustrative examples of areas where greater North/South co-operation might be both possible and of benefit to both parts of the island.

6 The Irish Government's paper of 23 September "Opportunities for Increased North/South Economic Co-operation, including in the EC Context", also indicated ways in which co-operation might be advanced.

7 Both papers indicated that there were opportunities for further co-operation between North and South which would be of practical benefit to both. Participants may wish to consider the shape of possible institutional arrangements in the light of these opportunities.

Issues to be Addressed

8 On the basis of the principles already discussed in the Committee, and against the background of the opportunities for increased co-operation indicated in the papers from the two Governments, the Committee could consider the key issues which will determine the shape of possible North/South institutional arrangements.

9 In the British Government's view, these include:

Who is to be involved?

What is the format to be?

What issues are to be covered?

How are any such institutional arrangements to operate?

What, if any, official support are they to have?

What relations would there be with other institutions?

How might they develop in the future?

Further Papers

10 As the Secretary of State said in his opening statement to Strand 2:

Her Majesty's Government has obligations and responsibilities which are relevant to Strand 2 discussions. But it has no blueprint of its own for Strand 2. A range of possible outcomes would be acceptable to it, but only provided they were also acceptable to the Talks participants taken together."

11 Consistent with that, we think it right in the first instance for the other participants to offer their proposals. The British Government is not therefore tabling institutional proposals of its own.

12 If it would be helpful, however, the Government would be prepared to table further papers analyzing, in part against the background of the principles discussed in Committee, the issues which seem to arise from proposals tabled by others, and attempting to identify possible areas of agreement and disagreement.

UK Government

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