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C O N F I D E N T I A L

cc Ajs J. Higgins ✓
Towt Sec. ✓

TALKS: STRAND II COMMITTEE, 9 SEPTEMBER - MORNING SESSION

Summary

After some fencing around the possibility of securing consensus on a different agenda from that which Sir Ninian had proposed on 3 September, the DUP implemented their threat to withdraw their negotiators from the Strand II Committee. The other five delegations then each made a substantive opening contribution on the "lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation" between North and South, during which HMG tabled its analytical paper. This first genuine substantive exchange in Strand II seemed to augur well for the future.

Detail

2. After Sir Ninian had recalled the position reached on 3 September, Dr Paisley expressed his concern about the fact that a particular agenda had been adopted by vote, rather than by consensus. He said that unless the other delegations were prepared to reconsider the "decision" he would wish to make a statement about the DUP's position. There was general support around the table, including from Mr Andrews, for the principle of proceeding by consensus which allowed Peter Robinson to draw the logical conclusion that delegations should therefore be prepared to revisit last Thursday's decision. However, Mr Wilson said there was "no point in boiling cabbage twice". Dr Paisley accordingly began to read the statement at Annex A. Peter Robinson used an intervention by Mr Flynn to reassert that if the other delegations were prepared to consider a different agenda, the statement need not be made. Ken Maginnis advanced the alternative suggestion that Sir Ninian should go round the table inviting each delegation in turn to present what it regarded as the main obstacle to a new relationship, and create an agenda that way. Dr Alderdice invited everyone to reassert the principle of proceeding by consensus. Mr Wilson confirmed that the Irish Government delegation would not be content to re-open the agenda. Dr Paisley completed his statement.

Sir Ninian suggested a meeting of delegation leaders as a last resort but Dr Paisley had to leave to preach at the funeral of a party stalwart and the idea was shelved.

3. After the coffee break the DUP delegation was represented by Denny Vitty and Gregory Campbell who confirmed they would feel free to intervene in the discussion without prejudice to their party's clearly expressed position. Sir Ninian appealed for no publicity to be given to any "walkout".

4. Dr Alderdice launched a substantive discussion of the first agenda item. He said the Alliance Party felt strongly that existing channels of communication were inadequate. He distinguished between "transferred" matters, in respect of which any Northern Ireland institutions should have power to enter into whatever arrangements with the Irish Government seemed appropriate; and non-transferred matters where a tripartite arrangement would be better, to enable HMG - with no dilution of sovereignty - to consult the regional government as well as the Irish Government. (In response to a question from Sir Ninian, he confirmed that he envisaged the tripartite institution as a vehicle for expressing Northern Ireland views to both Governments, not just to HMG.) As regards the structures which might apply to channels of communication and co-operation in respect of transferred matters, he thought there could be different structures in different areas and that precise arrangements would need to be carefully worked out, but hoped there could be outline agreement by the end of the Talks.

5. Referring to the possible European dimension, Dr Alderdice pointed out that there were areas where the interests of Northern Ireland and the Republic diverged as well as areas of convergence such as agriculture. Some aspects of the European dimension might feature in the North/South relationship but others might be appropriate for tripartite consideration.

6. Mr Andrews gave a list of possible areas for North/South contact and co-operation. He mentioned the possibility of a common Customs policy and asked whether there was a continuing need for the border in today's developing Europe. He referred to the concerns of Ken Maginnis about border road closures and of Seamus Mallon about the economic disadvantages of the border areas and asked whether consideration should be given to "dismantling the border". Noting the "appalling" effects of terrorism, he commented that there was no prospect of dismantling the border now or in the immediate future but that in the long term more cross-border roads would be in the mutual interest of border communities North and South. After a reference to "regionalisation" and "other areas" where links could be formalised, he said, with emphasis, that there had been too much megaphone politics and he was not interested in peripheral future formalisation but in "genuine, real, here and now links" between semi-state bodies, tourist boards, the IDA and IDB, Government Departments and so on.

7. There should, he continued, be a common approach to the European Community in search of European funding. The work of Co-Operation North, "tragically now concentrated on pious hopes", should be built up. The International Fund for Ireland and "other agencies" demonstrated the strength of existing links and provided examples of joint efforts to promote Northern Ireland as a tourist destination, to promote Irish products, to develop border areas etc.

8. Mr Hanley then spoke, drawing extensively on the draft speaking note circulated on 8 September (copy at Annex C) but weaving in references to previous speakers. He emphasised that in supporting the agenda proposed on 3 September, HMG was not according priority to one set of obstacles rather than another, and reinforced the need to address all the perceived obstacles to a new North/South relationship. This was duly noted by the DUP. With the agreement of other delegations, HMG's paper (text at Annex B) was tabled at the appropriate point, around paragraph 5 of the speaking note.

9. Denis Haughey said the SDLP took note of the British Government's paper and would respond in due course. Their position was that existing channels of communication and co-operation were very inadequate. This was the natural consequence of partition which had had a high economic cost for both parts of Ireland, most visibly in the border areas. There was also the terrible human cost of the continuing terrorist campaign. Since the collapse of the Constitutional Convention, the SDLP had pressed for structured co-operation between North and South and he suggested that the 1980 Dublin Summit ("totality of relationships") and ultimately the Anglo-Irish Agreement had flowed from this. He confirmed that in the SDLP's view, the Agreement was not a solution in itself but part of a process which provided a structured way of addressing the problem and had sought to involve everyone who was a party to the problems of Northern Ireland. The two Unionist parties had unfortunately not participated in the structures envisaged by the Agreement, but if the barriers of distrust were to be broken down there had to be dialogue and frameworks had to be created to allow dialogue and negotiation.

10. As to areas of common interest, agriculture provided a glaring example of a subject on which there was a natural convergence of interest between North and South but completely inadequate structures for co-operation and communication. The virtually identical interests of North and South differed from those of Great Britain and the lack of a common policy throughout Ireland had created deep and ongoing problems in several areas, of which Milk Quotas was only one. The whole island, especially Northern Ireland, would benefit from being treated as a single region for agricultural purposes within the EC. The meat of Strand II, he concluded, was to consider how to structure co-operation North and South to address their economic interests together. In fact the politicians were already far behind economic developments where the interdependency of the two economies was growing visibly all the time. It was necessary to look at political structures to find a way of exercising democratic political control to co-ordinate and advance common economic interests.

11. Ken Maginnis began by saying he had listened with unfulfilled expectation to Mr Andrews' remarks. The UUP had declared its intention to avoid and expose "semantic subterfuge" and he had been concerned about the apparently deliberate and intentional use of ambiguous phrases by Mr Andrews. As an example, he challenged Mr Andrews' reference to the "dismantling of the border": if this referred to removing obstacles to rail, air and road communications it was fair comment, but he assumed no one was foolish enough to imagine the Talks could discuss the constitutional removal of the border. (Mr Andrews dismissed the point as "just semantics".)

12. The UUP, Ken Maginnis continued, would welcome the development of "common" approaches with the South on many many issues. "Joint" approaches, however, would not be possible. Denis Haughey's suggestion of a common agricultural block for EC purposes was unacceptable because it would take Northern Ireland out of the UK for some purposes. The Unionist view was that the link with Great Britain had pros and cons and while everyone in Northern Ireland could disagree with HMG over milk quotas, Unionists were prepared to take the rough with the smooth. An all-Ireland approach to such issues would not always work to Northern Ireland's advantage either.

13. The UUP, he said, was ready to talk about ways of enabling the nationalist community to find its identity. Unionists were ready to co-operate in respect of tourism, employment creation, physical communications and in many other areas. As to structures, the UUP paper of 28 August had suggested a framework based on the assumption that there would be an internal political arrangement for Northern Ireland which would dedicate itself to establishing good working relationships with the Republic and to studying whether, on some issues and in the context of a local Assembly and a Council of the British Isles, it would be able to adopt a common approach with the Irish Government in EC matters. He pointed out that as Northern Ireland was a region within the UK, any devolved institutions would need to take some guidance from the sovereign (UK) Government, but the UUP's proposed "Irish and EC Committee"

provided a means for achieving a common cause with the Republic where there was a common interest. The proposed Inter-Irish Relations Committee would provide another means of regulating the North/South relationship. The important thing was to avoid ambiguous language and acknowledge that the existence of the international boundary need not hinder the development of a common cause in certain matters.

14. After an aside on the issue of whether business ethics in the South were sufficiently strong to enable a relationship to develop in that area, Ken Macinnis concluded by re-emphasising the UUP's readiness to pursue any genuine common interests and taking credit for suggesting mechanisms to facilitate that. If there were mutual trust and respect and a reciprocal desire on the part of the Irish Government and SDLP to move forward in pursuit of the same objectives, improved channels and improved communication could be established.

15. The meeting broke for lunch in a reasonably positive spirit, everyone feeling refreshed by the very different tone and nature of the debate once the agenda issue had been settled.

STATEMENT

BY

DR IAN PAISLEY

UDUP position

9 September 1992

No delegation to this Talks process could be unaware of the importance my delegation attaches to the issue of addressing the territorial claim to Northern Ireland contained in the Constitution of the Irish Republic. In my opening address in Strand 1 I raised this issue; in my opening remarks in Strand 2 I spoke on this matter, at length, and in the opening Strand 3 formation meeting I underlined the importance to us of removing this obstacle. In verbal and written submissions and in questions and answers throughout this process my delegation have emphasised the importance of dealing with this key factor. This is not a new matter raised without warning - it was well heralded in advance.

Nor, Mr Chairman, could any delegation be unaware of the priority which my delegation sought to give to this agenda item. In our submissions at every stage we have insisted that the removal of "the territorial claim" would free unionists to contemplate arrangements with the Irish Republic that in present circumstances they could not negotiate. While other delegations may not agree with the sequence we contemplated no delegation could be surprised at the view we expressed when discussion took place on Thursday last relating to the order in which the Committee might address each Agenda item.

Our view then, as now, was to address this constitutional issue first. In the initial paper compiled by the Chairman Articles 2 & 3 were the first item. The Chairman explained that this was because it was the issue delegations had raised more than any other in their submission to him of obstacles to a new relationship. However, the Chairman's document was not adopted because the Irish Republic's delegation complained that an issue they had raised in their submission should have been given equal priority. [This was in spite of the irony that the Republic had only placed this issue as the third item on its own list.]

We, like every other delegation took part in a discussion as to how the committee might resolve this issue. Yet when the Chairman later produced another paper suggesting an Agenda that my delegation found unacceptable there was no-one interested in resolving the difference. This time the Irish Republic sought to bulldoze the issue through by vote. We recognise that every other delegation voted in support of the Dublin delegation's proposal and expressed itself satisfied with this agenda which puts the Republic's territorial claim as the last item to be addressed. We remain opposed to this order of business and convinced that progress cannot be made on other matters in advance of an expression of willingness on the part of the Irish Republic's delegation to sponsor and support in the Dail and in the Republic legislation to amend their constitution.

We restate our consternation at the turn of events that has for the first time in the whole of the Talks process introduced voting as a means of deciding issues. We had thought, wrongly, it would seem, that we were engaged in a process of resolving disputes. Never before during any Strand in this process has voting formed part of the procedure.

We find ourselves in the position that until the Committee reaches what we see to be the key issue we are unable to play a full part in the proceedings. To this extent we are in a position not unlike that which the SDLP explained to Strand 1 delegates earlier this year. Like them we shall reserve our position. As evidence of our "non-negotiating" mode Mr Robinson and I, as the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party negotiators, shall withdraw until the committee is realistically addressing the "territorial claim". We shall, however, retain a non-negotiating presence at the committee meetings here, in Stormont, to keep ourselves appraised of developments. Our delegates will not enter into any negotiations but will reserve the right to speak if appropriate. My delegation and I are willing to meet with the Chairman at any time if he feels it might be helpful.

We regret that no attempt was made to accommodate our position.

I N C O N F I D E N C E

(9 September 1992)

STRAND 2 COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

ITEM 1: OVERCOMING LACK OF ADEQUATE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

Paper by Her Majesty's Government

The Committee has been asked by Plenary to facilitate its consideration of obstacles in the path of satisfying the common desire of the people of Ireland for a new relationship, and of ways in which those obstacles might be overcome.

2. At the suggestion of the Independent Chairman, the Committee is now considering ways of overcoming obstacles on the basis of a four item agenda. This paper is addressed to the obstacle specified in the first item:

- "lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation between North and South".

3. All the participants have indicated that better channels of communication and co-operation between North and South are a part of a positive vision for the future of relationships in the island of Ireland. In their Strand 2 papers addressed to agenda item 6 and tabled on 28 August, some participants (including the unionist parties) have already indicated the broad outlines of proposals for better channels of communication and co-operation.

4. For some participants, the achievement of a positive vision for the future of relationships in the island of Ireland depends on the removal of other obstacles, as well as overcoming the lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation between North and South. The agenda suggested by the Independent Chairman addresses these other obstacles.

5. This paper should not be taken to imply that the British Government considers that any lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation is the most important obstacle, or the first that must be cleared. It simply reflects the order of the agenda suggested by the Independent Chairman.

Possible principles for better channels

6. In considering ways of overcoming any lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation between North and South, the Committee might like to consider whether common ground can be established on what principles might underpin better channels. For convenience this paper, in looking at channels of communication and co-operation, concentrates mainly on the overall governmental level.

7. For example, should adequate channels of communication and co-operation between North and South be:

- such as to give expression and validity to each main tradition?
- such as to encourage, promote and develop improved relations and better understanding between both main traditions and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland?
- conducive to a new spirit of cordial co-operation and friendship, bringing a united effort for the common good, between the peoples of the island of Ireland?
- geared to the development of an "agreed Ireland", in the sense that whatever governmental arrangements apply are widely acceptable and aimed at protecting and forwarding the interests of the people of the island of Ireland?
- legitimate in the sense of respecting the democratic rights of the people of Northern Ireland and the people of the Republic of Ireland?

- widely acceptable in both parts of the island of Ireland?
- stable and durable?
- constructive and meaningful?
- capable of development, in response to changing political realities, with the agreement of all concerned?
- workable, in the sense of being as straightforward to operate as possible?
- based upon reciprocity?
- such as to avoid any entrenchment of the main community division and to encourage the development of an "agreed Ireland" in which both main traditions would be respected?
- able to provide a basis for consultation with a view to advancing co-operation for the mutual benefit of the parties concerned?
- innovative, in the sense of learning from and not merely modelled on any previous arrangements?
- conducive to the ending of terrorism and the enhancement of security co-operation?
- conducive to optimising 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?
- capable of securing public endorsement?

8. These possible principles, while they take account of the papers tabled by other participants on 28 August, are not exhaustive. It should not be assumed that the British Government would necessarily wish to argue for all of the principles in the

form set out above. This list is simply intended to assist the Committee in considering how to overcome any lack of adequate channels at present.

Key questions

9. If common ground can be established on the principles which might underpin better channels of communication and co-operation, the Committee could consider how, in practice, better channels might work and what form they might take.

10. The Committee might address some key questions about North/South channels, including:

- Who is to be involved?
- What is the format to be?
- What issues are to be covered?
- How are better channels to operate?
- What, if any, support are they to have?
- What relations would there be with other institutions?
- How might any channels develop in the future?

Who is to be involved?

11. Any adequate channels for communication and co-operation between North and South will involve representatives from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Should these representatives be drawn from:

- only those exercising some executive power? Or
- in addition, those parties or individuals not exercising executive power (eg opposition parties)?

12. One possibility is that there could be separate channels between those exercising executive power, and between the Dail and a Northern Ireland Assembly.

13. In the case of Northern Ireland, the Sub-Committee report of 10 June in any case envisaged that executive responsibilities would be allocated broadly in proportion to party strengths in the Assembly. It would still, however, be necessary to decide whether representatives from Northern Ireland institutions should be drawn from:

- heads of department
- chairmen (who may also be heads of department) and deputy chairmen of Assembly departmental committees
- other members of Assembly departmental committees
- other members of the Assembly (eg an Assembly External Affairs Committee)
- the Panel.

14. Participants may also want to consider whether representation in North/South channels should:

- be limited to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;
or
- include representatives from the United Kingdom Government and/or Parliament. (In this case it would also be necessary to consider on what basis such representatives should attend - for example, as observers or full participants.)

15. This may be influenced by what arrangements are agreed in Strand 3, and any relationship between those arrangements and North/South channels (see paragraphs 26 and 27 below).

What is the format to be?

16. North/South channels could take a variety of forms. The choice will be influenced by who is to be involved, what issues are to be covered and what, if any, powers are to be exercised. The possibilities include:

- ad hoc meetings between relevant Irish Ministers and representatives of political institutions in Northern Ireland on specific subjects when both sides agree to call them;
- meetings between relevant Irish Ministers and representatives of political institutions in Northern Ireland at regular intervals, or at the request of one side;
- meetings within a joint institutional framework in which Irish Ministers and representatives of political institutions in Northern Ireland would meet regularly, either individually or collectively;
- meetings (either ad hoc or institutionalised) between non-executive elected representatives from both jurisdictions (eg between an External Affairs Committee of the Assembly, if that were composed of non-executive members, and an equivalent group of Dail and Seanad members);
- establishment of joint institutions with delegated executive responsibility for specific subjects.

What issues are to be covered?

17. The remit of any North/South channels will be concerned with relationships within the island of Ireland. Participants might wish to consider whether this should include:

- only cross-border issues (eg economic development in the border areas, cross-border transport routes)

- possible all-Ireland matters (eg bringing agriculture or tourism policies more closely into line)
- policy matters internal to either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland (eg housing policy, management of hospitals).

18. At least some areas of these possible subjects are likely to remain the responsibility of the British Government in the first place. One example is policy towards the European Community, in which institutions in Northern Ireland will have a strong interest and there may be advantage in co-operation on an all-Ireland basis. But the British Government will have to continue to fulfil its responsibility to represent the United Kingdom as a whole. Another possible example is cross-border co-operation on security matters. So it is also necessary to decide whether the remit of any North/South channels should include:

- only transferred matters and their equivalent in the Republic; or
- any matter within the responsibilities of either the Government of the Republic or institutions in Northern Ireland; or
- any matter affecting relations within the island of Ireland (ie including matters which remain the responsibility of the UK Government).

19. Whatever matters are to be discussed, participants will also wish to consider whether matters should be discussed:

- either only with the agreement of all participants;
- or at the request of either.

20. Participants may also want to consider whether there are any subject areas where there should be an expectation of prior discussion before decisions are taken by institutions in each jurisdiction.

How are better channels to operate?

21. It would be possible to promote communication and co-operation without giving powers to any new institutions as such. For example, North/South meetings could result in agreements which would be implemented separately by the relevant institutions in each jurisdiction.

22. It would also be possible for certain powers to be exercised through North/South channels, rather than through the separate institutions in each jurisdiction. There are a range of possible powers that might be exercised in this fashion, such as:

- commissioning papers, research and reports as background for further discussion;
- making proposals or recommendations addressed to the relevant institutions in each jurisdiction for their consideration;
- addressing directives to the relevant institutions in each jurisdiction which they would be required to implement;
- disbursing any expenditure which might be granted to a North/South institution by both jurisdictions;
- establishing joint institutions;
- exercising executive authority in certain matters, either directly or by having power to take decisions which relevant institutions in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland would be required to implement.

23. It may be appropriate for different powers to be exercised through North/South channels according to the subject under consideration. For example, there might be agreement that certain executive powers could be exercised through North/South channels, but only on a limited range of matters. There could be discussion of other matters in North/South channels, but no exercise of executive power.

What, if any, support are they to have?

24. If there are to be permanent North/South channels for better communication and co-operation, then these will require some support from officials. The possible tasks include:

- arranging meetings
- drawing up agenda
- producing minutes
- providing background papers to any discussion
- acting as a channel for day-to-day communication
- making proposals for consideration
- administering any executive powers granted to a North/South institution.

25. Support from officials for these sorts of tasks could take a number of forms, such as:

- ad hoc meetings between officials from each jurisdiction to prepare the ground as necessary;
- establishment of a Republic of Ireland Government Office in Northern Ireland and of a Northern Ireland Government Office in the Republic;
- a permanent or ad hoc secretariat in which officials from each jurisdiction would be represented and would remain answerable to their respective jurisdictions;
- a permanent and independent secretariat which would be answerable directly to any North/South institution;

- a more powerful and independent commission, with members appointed by each side, which might have its own powers of initiative on the EC model.

What relations would there be with other institutions?

26. Strand 3 is considering relationships, including possible institutional arrangements, between the two Governments. These could be linked with better North/South channels arising from Strand 2.

27. The possibilities include:

- entirely separate channels for, on the one hand, the relationship between new political institutions in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government and, on the other hand, the relationship between the British and Irish Governments;
- one channel involving Northern Ireland, the Republic and the UK, for all matters affecting relationships within these islands;
- a channel specifically for communication and co-operation between new political institutions in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government, but operating within the wider framework of an institutionalised relationship between the British and Irish Governments.

How might any channels develop in the future?

28. Participants may also wish to consider how any North/South channels might develop in the future. There may be advantage in establishing flexible arrangements which can adapt to changing priorities and circumstances. For example:

- Responsibility for extra matters may be transferred to Northern Ireland institutions in the future. Should any North/South channels be capable of extending to include such additional transferred matters?

- Even if few or no executive powers are exercised through North/South channels, should there be the possibility of granting or extending such powers in the future? This could be subject to agreement by institutions in both Northern Ireland and the Republic.

- Linked to the previous possibility, any channels might be given an initial limited remit but also required to undertake a series of studies with a view to making recommendations about whether their remit, or those of other institutions, should be widened.

29. Other participants may wish to suggest other key questions which need to be addressed if there are to be adequate channels of communication and co-operation between North and South. The British Government would be happy to consider these, or to consider other ways of overcoming any lack of adequate channels.

UK Government
9 September 1992

STRAND 2 COMMITTEE: UK PAPER ON BETTER CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AND CO-OPERATIONSpeaking Note

Sir Ninian, at your suggestion, we are to turn from identifying obstacles, to considering ways of overcoming those obstacles. In particular, we are to consider ways of overcoming those obstacles under the four headings on the agenda you have suggested.

2. Our discussion so far in the Committee has been most helpful. Perhaps I could offer three of my own conclusions so far.

- First, if an issue is perceived as a fundamental obstacle by some of us, then it needs to be tackled.
- Second, if we are to reach what we all want - a new and better relationship within this island - then we must look at ways of overcoming all the obstacles to that relationship.
- Third, nothing can finally be agreed until everything is agreed.

3. Now that we turn to overcoming obstacles, we must, of course, start somewhere. You have suggested, Sir Ninian, and we have agreed, a four item agenda. For our part, we regard this simply as the order in which we are to discuss these broad issues. We certainly do not interpret it as giving an order of priority among these issues. Nor do we think it suggests that solving one obstacle need necessarily be dependent upon solving others. Our approach will be that we have to find ways of overcoming all these obstacles.

4. Item 1 on the agenda is ways of overcoming the "lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation between North and South". To help the Committee in its discussion, we have prepared, and are ready to table, a paper which looks at possible ways of achieving better channels of communication and co-operation.

5. The paper we have prepared is more by way of an analytical discussion paper, than a paper stating a firm position. It is certainly not a final and definitive statement of the British position. Our aim is to expose as many as possible of the different ways of improving channels for communication and co-operation between North and South.

6. I hope that such a paper will help the Committee. We are here to discuss fundamental aspects of the problem; and that must include ways of overcoming obstacles. We may, at a later stage in Strand 2, wish to return to the details. But if we are to make progress, I believe we now need to look positively at some solutions. Our paper tries to do that if the Committee would find it helpful, I shall arrange for its immediate circulation.

7. By way of introduction, the paper that we are tabling concentrates in particular on possible channels of communication and co-operation between political institutions in Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Ireland. There are, of course, lots of other possible channels. But if we are to develop what the DUP in their paper of 28 August called

"... a new spirit of cordial co-operation and friendship, bringing a united effort for the common good"

then that must include channels of communication and co-operation between political institutions in the North and the South.

8. The paper is in two halves. The first half attempts to suggest some possible principles for better channels of communication and co-operation. They follow closely the possible principles which we suggested in the British Government's own paper of 28 August. But, since then, we have had the benefit of studying the papers tabled by the other participants at the same time. We have attempted to reflect some of the helpful contributions made in those papers in this latest list of suggested principles.

9. There is room for many views on what should be the principles underpinning better channels of communication and co-operation. Our list of possible principles does not claim to be exhaustive. We expect and look forward to, debate on these principles, and whether some should be added, changed or deleted. We are not wedded to this list of possible principles. But we offer them as an aid to discussion. We would welcome reactions from other participants. Some might wish, for example, to offer their own possible principles.

10. But, as we have found before in these Talks, it often helps to move from principles to specifics. So I hope that we can reach some common ground on the principles which might help us overcome the lack of adequate channels for communication and co-operation between North and South.

11. In this hope, the second half of the paper moves on from principles, to consider some of the more key questions we shall need to answer if we are to establish better channels of communication and co-operation.

12. Of course, better channels do not necessarily have to be institutionalised. The very best channels are often the informal bonds of friendship and good neighbourliness which unite different people in a common sense of purpose. I respect the desire which has been expressed by some participants for flexibility. But, if we are to put right what is perceived as a lack of adequate channels at present, then for our part we think that formal channels of communication and co-operation between political institutions in the North and the South have an important part to play.

13. So the second half of this paper sets out some of the key questions which this raises:

Who is to be involved?

What issues are to be covered? etc

14. There are many answers to each of these questions. The paper seeks to suggest a good number of the possibilities. It does not seek to set out one particular answer or format. I don't believe that is appropriate at this stage. But I hope that it will demonstrate the breadth of possibilities that we might want to consider.

15. This is a lengthy paper. I am conscious that you, Sir Ninian, and others will need time to absorb it. So I certainly do not look for immediate reactions.

16. Nor do I want to claim that this paper covers all the options or possibilities. If others wish to respond with papers or suggestions of their own, we will consider those very carefully.

17. But I hope it demonstrates that there are ways of overcoming the lack of adequate channels of communication and co-operation between North and South. As, I am sure, there are ways too of overcoming the other important obstacles which we must also tackle.