

POLITICAL TALKS: COMMON PRINCIPLES
(Draft 1 of 5 May 1992)

1. Taking as read the statement of 26 March 1991 in which it was accepted that the talks must focus on three main relationships, talks participants have identified a number of principles which should underlie any new political institutions in Northern Ireland.

2. It is agreed that they ^{be institutions} should be -
- a. based on democratic principles and reflect the wishes of the electorate;
 - b. widely acceptable ^{in particular} in the sense of providing an appropriate and equitable role for ^{all sections} both sides of the community, such that both ^{all} main parts of the Northern Ireland ^{communities} should be able to identify with ^{them} it and feel that their representatives have a meaningful ^{function} ~~role~~ to perform;
 - c. stable and durable in the sense of not being dependent on a particular election result or political deal. The system should, so far as possible, be self-sustaining; (^{what does this mean?}).
 - d. capable of ^{development} ~~evolution~~, in response to changing political realities, with the agreement of all concerned; - ^{who is this?}
 - e. workable, in the sense of being as straightforward to operate as possible;
 - f. such as to avoid any entrenchment of the main community division, and to ^{encourage} enable the development of a ~~fully pluralist~~ society in which ^{both main traditions} both main traditions would ^{be separate} have parity of esteem; ^{contribution to be respected}

on the demand of respect & recognition

- g. such as to provide all constitutional political parties ^{to achieve a} role at an ^{each} ~~equal~~ level of responsibility, and ^{to have a} power ⁱⁿ ~~proportion~~ proportional to their electoral strength in broad terms;
- h. able to function effectively, efficiently and decisively within clearly defined areas of responsibility;
- i. innovative, in the sense of learning from and not ^{merely repeating} ~~modelled~~ ^{on} ~~any~~ previous arrangements.

3. It was also suggested that any new political institutions should be:

- a. established within a ~~newly~~ defined relationship with UK institutions;
- b. competent to manage any ~~new~~ relationship developed in strand two of the talks;
- c. capable of developing a direct relationship with EC institutions;
- d. compatible with any arrangements there might be for devolving powers to other countries or regions within the United Kingdom;
- e. capable of developing relationships with any devolved institutions in Great Britain; ^{power - future}

- f. capable of securing public endorsement;
- g. consistent with the maximum ^{workable} possible delegation of authority;
- h. such as to ensure the greatest possible degree of parliamentary scrutiny of and public accountability for the exercise of powers of government within Northern Ireland.