

19 June 1992

A POSSIBLE AGENDA FOR STRAND 2 OF THE TALKS

Paper by Her Majesty's Government

The British Government welcome the opportunity to discuss a possible agenda for Strand 2 of the Talks.

2. In his statement on 26 March 1991, the former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr Peter Brooke MP, said that discussions in Strand 2 would focus on relationships "among the people of the island of Ireland." He also said:

"In order to ensure a full airing of the issues, it will be open to each of the parties to raise any aspect of these relationships, including constitutional issues, or any other matter which it considers relevant."

3. The possible agenda for Strand 2 might therefore reflect all aspects of relationships within the island of Ireland which participants wish to address in Strand 2. These might include:

- How to enable all participants to acknowledge and, where appropriate, give constitutional expression to Northern Ireland's status as a part of the United Kingdom; and to recognise that there will be no change in that status without the consent of a majority of the people who live there, that the present wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland is for no change but that, if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland, then both Governments will introduce and support legislation to give effect to that wish.

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- How best to provide, within the relationships covered by Strand 2, for expression and recognition of the Irish identity of the minority community within Northern Ireland.

- How to give institutional expression to relationships among the people of the island of Ireland and, in particular, what arrangements should exist for consultation and co-operation between new political institutions in Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Ireland.

4. In the context of a possible agenda for Strand 2, it may also be helpful to consider possible arrangements for liaison between Strand 2 and both Strand 1 and Strand 3. In particular:

- How best to accommodate within Strand 2, the outcome of Strand 1 discussions held prior to Strand 2. The meeting might, for example, wish to consider whether different outcomes from these discussions might affect the possible agenda for Strand 2.

- How best to arrange liaison between Strands 2 and 3. There might, for example, be subjects which could appropriately be raised in both strands.

5. In Strand 1, the parties first sought to identify common themes and principles, before considering specific institutional proposals. A similar approach to Strand 2 may be helpful. With this in mind, and with the intention of covering all the aspects identified in paragraph 3, the British Government considers that a possible agenda for Strand 2 might be:

(1) Opening statement by the Chairman.

(2) Progress in Strand 1: report by the Secretary of State.

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- (3) Opening presentations on Strand 2 by all participants.
- (4) Responses to opening presentations.
- (5) Identification of underlying realities, common interests and common themes.
- (6) Common principles concerning institutional arrangements to give expression to relationships among the people of the island of Ireland.
- (7) Consideration of specific proposals which may be tabled by any of the participants.
- (8) Implications of Strand 2 for wider relations:
 - (a) relations between the two Governments and any role for Northern Ireland institutions in them;
 - (b) constitutional issues;
 - (c) implications for shared membership of the European Community.

6. The issues which specific proposals under item (7) might address are likely to include:

- The constitutional position of Northern Ireland.
- The nature of institutional arrangements within the island of Ireland, including
 - (i) the involvement, on the one hand, of new political institutions in Northern Ireland and, on the other, of institutions in the Republic of Ireland;

(ii) the matters within the scope of such arrangements;

(iii) the circumstances under which such arrangements might provide for co-operative action;

(iv) the circumstances, if any, under which such arrangements might develop further.

- The relationship between such institutional arrangements and United Kingdom institutions.

- The relationship, if any, between such institutional arrangements and the European Community.

- Arrangements for validating the outcome of the Talks process as a whole insofar as the issues for discussion in Strand 2 are concerned.

This list is not exhaustive; other issues may emerge in discussion.

UK Government

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