

ALLIANCE PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

AN INITIAL PAPER ADDRESSING AGENDA ITEMS 7, 8 & 9

Alliance believes that while there has been valuable work done by many voluntary groups and public bodies working for the common good of both parts of the island of Ireland, there is an obvious need to build on and extend such co-operation.

Recognising the difficulties and real anxieties of the delegations and appreciating that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, we feel it necessary to begin to flesh out some of our ideas on North/South structures which could be implemented if other areas e.g. Articles 2 & 3 were to be satisfactorily resolved.

We base our submission on the understanding that as wide a range of powers as possible (not less than in 1973) would be devolved to a responsibility-sharing Northern Ireland Assembly along possible understandings of the progress report from Strand I

Collaborative Institutions and Structures could involve those exercising executive powers in a Northern Ireland Assembly & Ministers from the Dail. Such structures could have a role as far as devolved matters might be concerned.

As far as excepted and reserved matters are concerned the structures could be tripartite between Her Majesty's Government/Northern Ireland Government/Republic of Ireland Government.

As far as North/South structures are concerned such meetings could be between respective Heads of Department/Ministers and their counterparts on a regular basis.

Specific topics could be examined by Civil Servants for each jurisdiction with report back to their respective Minister. This might include research, reports, recommendations etc.

Issues to be covered could be as wide as possible in the interests of the people of both North & South.

Where matters fall within the remit of Her Majesty's Government, again tripartite involvement would be essential.

It seems obvious these matters to be discussed could only be furthered by agreement. Trust must be built.

Any understanding reached could be implemented separately by the relevant Heads of Department/Minister in each jurisdiction.

There could be a permanent secretariat in which officials from each jurisdiction could be represented and would remain answerable to their respective jurisdiction.

Such structures as above could be capable of flexibility and

might adapt to changes. The essential governing feature must be the establishment of goodwill, co-operation and trust - the removal of suspicion and mistrust.

If mutual trust was established over an initial working period we could envisage joint working groups in each area of responsibility which could be given some power and finance to research new methods of co-operation and to report thereon.

The value of co-operation appearances in the context of our common memberships of the EC should be addressed.

All of this could be achieved by the proper addressing of the central and constitutional issues which have stifled mutual respect.