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Dear John

As you know, the opening meeting of Strand III of the current political talks was held in Dublin on 28 July.

During that meeting, the two Governments discussed what their approach should be to the establishment of detailed arrangements for liaison with the Northern Ireland parties during Strand III. The resultant proposals are set out in paragraph 2 of the attached note which we would be happy to discuss further with you and the other party leaders.

At the Strand III meeting on 28 July we also dealt with the formal opening items on the agenda which had been agreed at the meeting in Strand III formation held in London on 30 June. We intend to begin discussion of the substantive agenda in the week beginning 7 September and would propose to hold a liaison meeting shortly thereafter. Perhaps we could have a word in the margins of the Strand II plenary on 2 September to determine a mutually convenient time.

*Patrick Mayhew*

Sir Patrick Mayhew QC MP  
Secretary of State  
for Northern Ireland

*David Andrews*

Mr David Andrews TD  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

## Note by British and Irish Governments

The following arrangements were agreed by all the Talks participants in May last year:

While participating parties remain free to discuss Strand III issues with the Governments, Strand III discussions will be concerned with the relationship between the two Governments, and will take place between the two Governments:

- other participating parties will be kept in touch with progress during Strand III by regular liaison;
- the two Governments will meet other participating parties at their request for further discussion of Strand III issues while Strand III is taking place;
- the outcome of Strand III will be considered by all the participants alongside the outcome of the other two strands and nothing will be finally agreed in any strand until everything is agreed in the Talks as a whole.

The Strand I formation or the Strand II formation, as appropriate, may consider issues further in the light of progress in Strand III.

2. The two Governments confirm their commitment to these arrangements. They recognise the importance of effective liaison arrangements, since 'nothing will be finally agreed in any strand until everything is agreed in the Talks as a whole'. They have discussed how these arrangements should be put into practice. The two Governments will convene meetings in Strand III as they require. They propose that:

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- There will be regular meetings between the two Governments, as the participants in Strand III, and the other participants in the Talks as a whole, in which the two Governments will report progress in Strand III.
- The two Governments will convene these liaison meetings as progress in Strand III requires. They will report progress orally, but will also circulate, when they decide an appropriate point has been reached, all papers which have been provisionally agreed in Strand III.
- These regular liaison meetings will normally involve up to three members of each delegation.
- The other participants will be welcome in these liaison meetings to put forward their views on Strand III issues under discussion.
- The outcome of Strand III will be considered by all the participants alongside the outcome of the other two strands and nothing will be finally agreed in any strand until everything is agreed in the Talks as a whole.

3. All briefings reporting progress in Strand III will be given by the two Governments to all four parties together, as envisaged in paragraph 2 above. In addition to these liaison arrangements, the two Governments will be ready, either separately or together, to meet other delegations individually, at their request, to hear their views or representations on Strand III issues. Any response that may be given by the two Governments will be given jointly.

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