

its choosing from the rest of the body politic sharing its identity, it is valid and proper that that community should express an allegiance to the state which embraces the identity of the main body politic to which it belongs.

7. The nationalist community in NI is one which finds itself in a situation where it has been cut off from the body politic with which it most identifies and in a situation where it has never assented in any formal sense to the political institutions under which it has been obliged to live. At 'best' it has passively accepted this situation, at 'worst' sections of the nationalist community have violently opposed it.

8. Unionists argue that while they will respect and recognise the kind of Irish identity professed by Nationalists, they are unwilling to acknowledge as valid the allegiance that follows from it. To uphold their argument they:

- seem to deny that Nationalists really feel as strongly as they themselves do about *their* identity and the allegiance that flows from it;

- they deny the possibility of a dual political allegiance within NI and argue that Nationalists are not entitled to express *their* allegiance in any manner similar to how Unionists express theirs, in other words they seem to be demanding that Nationalists should give allegiance to political institutions designed to reflect ~~the~~ an exclusively unionist identity;

- they argue that the people of NI are a *people* in the sense understood in UN declarations and covenants and that as such have an unqualified right to self-determination.

9. The truth of the matter is that Nationalists do feel equally as strong about their identity as do Unionists about their Britishness and are equally entitled to an expression of the allegiance that flows from their identity and, as indicated above, these Talks have affirmed their rights in this regard. *(But perhaps this is a new line generally accepted around the table)*

10. It is not impossible to devise ways by which the allegiance of Nationalists to a wider Irish political entity can be accommodated alongside the expression of Unionists' allegiance to their Britishness. If Unionists insist that allegiance to the Crown and their identity are interdependent then they must logically concede the same to the Nationalist community. Our proposals to the Talks have been aimed at demonstrating the feasibility of this proposition *both with respect to arrangements for NI itself a for any new international arrangements.*

11. The history of NI makes clear that the coherence and commonality necessary to sustain the 'people' argument are missing in the sense in which that term would be understood in international covenants today. The people living in NI do not constitute 'a people' in the accepted international usage of the term. They are a divided people consisting of two communities and to see them in isolation from the rest of island, or indeed from Britain is to deny fundamental realities of the problem. *Any*

change in status seems to me to lie within the narrow parameters set by these relationships.

Allegiance and Support the Essential Objectives of a New Agreement

12. The SDLP has emphasised throughout these Talks that it seeks a solution which will succeed in winning cross-community support of the widest possible kind in Northern Ireland and the maximum possible support in the rest of Ireland as well. The SDLP believes that these objectives place the outcome beyond merely restoring the conduct of affairs in Northern Ireland to directly elected representatives of the people living here. In fact, these objectives entail ensuring, as far as is possible, that the whole community will be able to identify with the institutions to be established and, if necessary, translate that identification into active support against any threat from whatever its source.

13. Attracting widespread support across our communities will not be easy. However, it is the firm view of the SDLP that such support will only be given to institutions which fully acknowledge the two major political traditions which exist within Northern Ireland, and, by doing so, enable people in both sections of our society to give allegiance and support to them.

Achieving Allegiance and Support

14. To achieve this allegiance and support for new political institutions will, of course, have to demonstrate fair play, and equality of treatment to the public representatives of both communities and, through them, to society as a whole. However, such a basis does not fully address the process of *political identification* on which allegiance is dependent because it does not acknowledge the essence of the nationalist identity and so cannot indicate how that identity might be accommodated alongside the British identity of the Unionist community. Indeed, proposals which go no further than demonstrating fair play and equality of treatment can be predicated upon an *exclusively* British context. Therefore, while, in general terms, such proposals might be both acceptable and sufficient in a society in which equity of treatment for minorities was the only issue, they are not sufficient in a society in which *allegiance* is a central problem.

15. The only means by which ^{the} this issue of allegiance can be addressed and, in addressing it, render it non-problematic is by placing it at the centre of proposals for new institutions. (For this to happen ~~some form of~~ clear expression of identity is required.) The proposals which the SDLP has tabled have been formulated with this aim as a fundamental requirement.

on establishing good neighbourly N-S relations ~~between~~ N-S as ^{might be done} ~~between~~ two separate States foreign to each other. These objectives are intended to ensure, as far as is possible, that people the overwhelming majority in both communities will be able