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**FROM: A J ADAMS
ESL DIVISION
23 August 1993**

cc: Mr Thomas -B
Mr Bell O/R -B
Mr Williams -B
Mr Watkins -B
Mr Brooker -B
Mr Cooke -B
Mr Dodds -B
Mr Quinn -B
Mr Archer, RID -B

Ms Lodge -B

TALKS: COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH ISLES

I have a few comments on the points you made in the draft circulated on 12 August, which I have only just seen. As you say our focus should be on a forum for Northern Ireland, as oppose to a UK-wide remit. One of the unattractive aspects of the Unionist approach is that it would create an outlet for regional or nationalist political pressures elsewhere in the UK which might be more difficult to handle if there are awkward by-election results in Wales or Scotland, together with an adverse outcome from the European Election next year further undermining the Government's authority at Westminster.

2. On representation you raised in paragraph 15 the question of the AIC or an equivalent body acting as a supportive mechanism for the new Committee of the Regions (COR). We do not know to what extent the concept of Europe's regions having closer direct links with the Community will become a reality. That may receive more impetus in other Member States but I doubt whether the UK Government will be anxious to promote it. Indeed a Welsh Nationalist suggestion that a conference of Welsh Local Authority leaders be created to handle feedback from the COR has been firmly rejected by Welsh Office ministers since it resembles too closely the Senate that the Welsh Nationalist wish to create. As EC regional policies become

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relatively more important and a matter of greater political sensitivity elsewhere in the UK (including parts of England) the Cabinet Committee concerned with those issues might evolve new mechanisms for handling them.

3. I do not disagree with anything you say in the section on human rights.
4. In the points to make on security and related matters (paragraph 43) you might make some brief reference to the inter-governmental pillars of Maastricht becoming gradually a more important fact of life, reinforcing cooperation between the UK and the Republic.

(Signed)

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