

FROM: M J WILLIAMS  
US(POL)

20 August 1993

cc Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Brooker - B  
Mr Quinn - B  
Mr Dodds - B  
Ms Lodge - B  
Mr Adams, ESL  
Mr Beeton - B  
Mr McKervill - B  
Mr Hallett

Mr Cooke - B

**TALKS: INTERGOVERNMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS INCLUDING PROPOSALS FOR A  
COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH ISLES**

I had a word on the telephone with Ms Lodge about the useful paper she prepared, accompanying her minute of 12 August. One of my main comments was that, like Mr Archer (his minute to you of 16 August), the paper would be more valuable if it reflected what we know of the views of the Irish/SDLP. Mr Archer has most helpfully expanded the draft along those lines, and I would like now to offer a few comments on his draft.

2. First, a few general points. The draft contains, in each section, a suggested "line to take". These appear to be intended for use with UUP, and as such seem unexceptionable. However they would not do for use with the Irish/SDLP, and might well need modification depending upon the precise circumstances in which they were to be used, even with Unionists.

3. A second general point is that, as far as I understand, the Irish have not articulated their position at all on a possible Council of the British Isles, or indeed on the precise details of intergovernmental arrangements. While their general approach is reasonably clear, therefore, it is not easy to represent their position with confidence in each of the sections into which the paper is broken down.

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4. A third general point is that one of the Irish objectives - possibly their main one - is to increase their influence on formulation of policy in Northern Ireland. They will if at all possible try to obtain a greater role in any future arrangement than they have at present under the existing Anglo-Irish Agreement. This factor arises at a number of points in the draft.

5. I offer the following specific comments.

- Section I (Overall Objectives), paragraph 2. "To retain and increase Irish influence..."
- Para 5, third sentence. "Both wish the Irish at least to preserve..."
- Section II (Reciprocity). I am not sure the analysis here really deals with the problem. The UUP objective appears to be that of getting away from the present situation, where the Irish have the right to influence policy and to enquire into cases within Northern Ireland, but there is no reciprocal right in relation to the Republic. Although we have not actually spelt this out, it appears that, under the Agreement which we would envisage replacing the present Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Irish would continue to have this role in relation to security matters within Northern Ireland, but there would continue to be no comparable way for us to enquire about matters within the Republic. I doubt whether the Unionists would find this acceptable, even if the successor Conference was within the framework of the AIIC (as the present Conference is of course) to which reciprocity does apply.
- Para 11. At end of first sentence "rights at least to put forward views."

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- Para 14. I do not believe this Point to Make would be effective with the Unionists, nor is it clear that it truly reflects HMG's position in relation to the remit of the successor Conference on eg security. The first sentence is not at all clear.
  
- Section V(a) Human Rights, para 30. Replace second sentence with the following "His ideas are not developed, but appear to be based firmly on arrangements within the Island of Ireland, including perhaps looking forward to a possible future when unionists would be a minority within a united Ireland".

[signed MJW]

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