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<b>Reference Code:</b>	2004/7/2599
<b>Title:</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs memorandum summarising views towards a Council of Ireland expressed by the Ulster Unionist Party
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	24 October, 1973
<b>Level of description:</b>	Item
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	2 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
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Unionist Party views on a Council of Ireland.

1. The Unionist Party, in imposing recognition and security pre-conditions to the formation of an "inter-governmental" Council of Ireland and in limiting its functions to the non-contentious areas of economic and social affairs, obviously sees the institution as one which will buttress Northern Ireland's position as part of the United Kingdom. Far from being an institution with an in-built potential for development and evolution, leading inter alia to a politically expressible reconciliation of both Irish traditions, an all-Ireland council should have "a clearly defined role which cannot pose any threat to the Union", if it is to be acceptable to Glengall Street Unionism. A council<sup>So</sup> constituted would of course fall far short of our expectations.

2. We can look forward to no development in Unionist thinking in this area. The outline of policies submitted by the party prior to the Darlington conference specified that "...such action [acceptance by the South of the right of the people of the North to self determination and a greater commitment of the Southern Government to co-operate in ending terrorism in Northern Ireland] would enable a joint Irish inter-governmental Council to be formed with equal membership from the Governments of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Such a Council could discuss matters of mutual interest, particularly in the economic and social field", (my parenthesis).

Five months later, in February 1973, Faulkner stated "There will be no question of any Council of Ireland being open-ended. There will be no question of it dealing with constitutional matters. Its only functions will be economic and social". In the party manifesto published on the eve of Assembly elections, Glengall Street rejected "any attempt by the Dublin Government to interfere in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland" and vowed to disallow "any Council of Ireland to become a stage on the road to Irish Unity". The latest statement of Unionist party policy on a Council of Ireland was issued this week on behalf

of Dr. Norman Agnew, Assembly member for East Belfast, and showed no deviation.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. O. G.' or similar, written in a cursive style.

24.X.1973.