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## Pre-Darlington

References to a "Council of Ireland" by political organisations and spokesmen

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1. The establishment of structures for co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic are considered by the Unionist, Labour, Liberal and Alliance Parties and by the New Ulster Movement as being vital to the development of effective co-operation between both communities in Northern Ireland.
2. What follows is a brief summary of proposals relating to structures of North-South co-operation advanced by four non-nationalist political parties in the North and by the New Ulster Movement.

The Unionist Party's Irish Inter-Governmental Council

"Toward the Future - a Unionist Blueprint" published in September 1972 proposes " a joint Irish Inter-Governmental Council to be formed with equal membership from the Governments of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic" to discuss matters of mutual interest, particularly in the economic and social field. The Unionist Party document makes it quite clear however that this Council would be established only if preceded by "several major contributions from the South". -

"The first contribution which must be made is the acceptance by the South of the right of the people of the North to self-determination" and

"The second contribution must be a greater commitment of the Southern Government to co-operate in ending terrorism here.... Either the extradition treaty should be re-negotiated or the British Isles made a Common Law enforcement area....."

The wording of the proposal relating to the Inter-Governmental Council leaves little doubt that its function would be purely advisory.



The N.I.L.P.: "a consultative and deliberative body"

The Northern Ireland Labour Party's proposals for Parliamentary reform published in September advocates

"a new Council of Ireland as a consultative and deliberative body charged with the task of exploring areas of mutual co-operation for the benefit of all who live in Ireland".

In return the Republic would be asked to review again its attitude to the rights of the people of Northern Ireland, in particular its claim of jurisdiction over them which, the Party claims, acts as a major irritant to the present situation.

The Ulster Liberal Party: "... a Joint Council..."

The Ulster Liberal Party propose the setting up of permanent consultative machinery between Northern Ireland and the Republic to deal with matters of common interest.

"It should take the form of a Joint Council whose members would be appointed in equal numbers by the Northern Ireland Finance Committee and the Government in Dublin. It would have no executive powers, but one of its functions would be to investigate the necessity for joint commissions upon which powers could be conferred by the Dáil and the Assembly for specific purposes".

The U.L.P.'s document suggests that the economic development and policing of the Foyle Valley region might well be an area for North-South co-operation. Unlike the Unionist and Labour proposals, the Ulster Liberal Party's Joint Council is not dependent on a prior declaration by the Republic of a change in policy, etc.

The N.U.M.: "... good neighbourliness between North and South"

The New Ulster Movement published "A new Constitution for Northern Ireland" in August 1972 and in relation to the need for "good

neighbourliness between North and South" proposed the establishment of several structures akin to the 'Council of Ireland' concept, viz.

1. "an all-Ireland Standing Committee to keep the laws of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic under constant review and to keep divergencies to a minimum".
2. "a standing committee of educationalists and others to study and advise on all aspects of education in Ireland".
3. "Administration of matters of joint interest by joint statutory bodies".
4. A Joint Development Commission to "study the development of areas with a natural and common link such as Derry and Donegal...".

The Alliance Party: "An Anglo-Irish Council"

The Alliance Party's leader, Phelim O'Neill M.P., speaking before the Whitelaw Constitutional Conference said quite clearly that Alliance was not interested in participating in any sterile arguments about the rights or wrongs of the decision to partition Ireland in 1920. Notwithstanding this declaration, the Party had examined the idea of a Council of Ireland but believed that

"the structure should be an Anglo-Irish Council with representatives from political parties at Westminster, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Dáil".

It envisaged that such a Council would have advisory powers only but would attempt to achieve "joint planning for common economic, social and agricultural problems facing the whole island...".