

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES****IRELAND**

**Reference Code:** 2004/21/3

**Title:** Irish government notes on the British and Irish positions and views regarding the proposed tripartite conference to be held on Northern Ireland in December 1973 (Sunningdale talks).

**Creation Date(s):** October, 1973

**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 3 pages

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Access Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

*Copy sent to Taoiseach & Secretary on 12/10*  
TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE

*5/18/74  
 Meeting!  
 In file of - copy on 5/18/76  
 Council of Ireland on new file in  
 Provisional Irish Views*

British Views

1. Venue in Britain  
 Civil Service College, Sunningdale  
 or R.A.F. Staff College, Brackwell.
2. British Invitation.
3. Governmental representation only.  
 Northern Ireland Secretary,  
 Foreign Secretary and junior  
 Ministers ad hoc. Prime Minister  
 to open, and in reserve.
4. 'Make or Break' Nature.  
 One week. Agreed Communiqué.
5. British Chairman - Northern Ireland  
 Secretary?
6. Verbatim text of proceedings  
 Cash bar  
 Other expenses borne by Britain
7. Sittings in Camera.  
 Minimise media briefings.
8. Timing and Agenda left open for  
 the present. No discussion of  
 internment or policing.

Provisional Irish Views

1. Venue in Northern Ireland.  
*Same venue about a  
 Tripartite Conference*  
*24/10/73*
2. Joint Invitation.
3. Agreed. Minister for Foreign  
 Affairs, Attorney General and  
 one other. Taoiseach to open  
 and in reserve.
4. Agreed but no restriction on  
 time.
5. Outside Chairman if at all  
 possible. If not, rotating  
 Chairmen.
6. Agreed.
7. Exclude press completely.  
 Prior agreement on bars on  
 interviews. Agreed daily  
 bulletin?
8. No restrictions on Agenda  
 accepted at present.

COUNCIL OF IRELAND

British Views

9. General British approach to  
 Council of 'benevolent neutrality'.

Provisional Irish Views

9. Salutary, *as an advance* but unacceptable in  
 that the needs of the situation  
 demand positive action from  
 all participants; all reforms  
 to date have been imposed by  
 Britain over Unionist protes

- |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>10. Further British-Irish talks to be held very shortly, covering, in the first instance the financing of a Council.</p> | <p>10. Agreed. Preliminary discussion between relevant Departments on financial and political responsibility of Council.</p> |
| <p>11. Reservations on Consultative Assembly.</p>                                                                           | <p>11. Reservations unacceptable but further clarification of our proposals advisable, at political level.</p>               |
| <p>12. Varying membership of Ministerial/ Executive body a mistake.</p>                                                     | <p>12. Permanent hard-core of Ministers plus others ad hoc</p>                                                               |
| <p>13. Role of Council in relation to R.U.C. only discussable if similar role in relation to Gardai agreed.</p>             | <p>13. At present under discussion at the political level.</p>                                                               |
| <p>14. Asked for details of our proposals on Human Rights and Common Courts.</p>                                            | <p>14. Will be forwarded. Should we include material on reciprocal prosecutions?</p>                                         |
| <p>15. Acceptance of Northern Ireland. Need for something more than speeches.</p>                                           | <p>15. Formulation of our detailed position desirable.</p>                                                                   |

PROPOSED ACTION:                      By Government

- (a) Preliminary contact with Official Unionists on
- (a) details of a Conference and
  - (b) the broad scope of our proposals for a Council of Ireland.

By Government

- (b) Further clarification of our position on
- (a) the Consultative Assembly and the Council's powers to evolve
  - (b) policing and security cooperation generally, and
  - (c) acceptance of Northern Ireland.

By Officials

- (c) Preparation of a memorandum for transmission to the British on Human Rights and Common Courts.

By Officials

- (d) Preparation of further position papers on the functions of a Council of Ireland and in particular, following consultation with relevant Government Departments, on the financial and political accountability of the Council, in preparation for a further round of official talks in London. A detailed case study of all the steps involved in allocating one function to the Council of Ireland is also being undertaken.