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Proposals for a Council of Ireland by Unionists,  
S.D.L.P. and Alliance Parties

1. STRUCTURE OF A COUNCIL

Unionist Proposals:

The Council should consist of an equal number of representatives of the Governments of Northern Ireland and the Republic and be attended by a representative of the Westminster Government; decisions to be unanimous, chairmanship to alternate and meetings of Council to be open to the Press.

S.D.L.P. Proposals:

- (i) a Council of Ministers, which would be the chief decision-making body of the Council of Ireland. The Dublin Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to have five representatives each of the Council of Ministers; chairmanship to rotate.
- (ii) an Assembly drawn equally from the Northern Ireland Assembly and Dáil Éireann (25 representatives from each side). The Assembly to have powers to ask questions; to debate matters with which the Council of Ministers is concerned; to pass resolutions and propose an increase in the powers of the Council of Ireland. There should also be power to form consultative committees and members should be paid.
- (iii) a Secretariat headed by a Secretary General to initiate and formulate policy for consideration by the Council of Ministers and to implement the decisions of that Council. The Secretariat should be independent of the civil services North and South.
- (iv) an all-Ireland court comprised of an equal number of judges from North and South and with a President appointed by the European Court of Human Rights. Initially, the Court to interpret the laws and orders made by the Council. The Court to act also as a Court of Human Rights for the whole country to which any citizen could appeal.
- (v) there should be an Economic Affairs Committee.
- (vi) there should also be a Committee of Culture and the Arts.

Alliance Proposals:

- (i) the Council of Ireland to consist of seven representatives each from the Northern Ireland Executive and the Dublin Government.
- (ii) an inter-parliamentary advisory body provided that it is equally representative of the Dáil and the Northern Assembly. They suggest twenty members from each, to be elected by proportional representation.
- (iii) the Council should have a small high-powered Secretariat under a Secretary-General. Secretariat to have power to prepare papers and projects for discussion by the Council.

2. FUNCTIONS OF A COUNCILUnionist Proposals:

The Council to discuss social and economic matters which require co-ordinated action by the Governments North and South and with a view to reaching a joint approach on E.E.C. regional policy. Also, the Council to discuss progress in the elimination of terrorism and provide for an exchange of views on possible further measures. Means of fostering better understanding between the differing political aspirations North and South, may also be discussed by the Council. It will require a 75% vote of support in the Dáil and the Northern Ireland Assembly on all matters of policy.

S.D.L.P. Proposals:

The Council to exercise exclusive executive functions for the whole of Ireland in such matters as tourism, electricity, regional development, telecommunications as well as having a major role in the control of police in both parts of the country. It should have power to harmonise structures, laws and services in both parts of Ireland as well as consultative and advisory role; the Council should have power to evolve and add to its powers by agreement and this power should be specifically built into the arrangements for the establishment of the Council. The British Government should make it clear that it would place no obstacles in the way of such evolution once it had been agreed by the Council members.

Alliance Proposals:

The Council to have advisory functions in relation to security and policing (with particular reference to a common law enforcement area), regional development, agriculture, transport, power, common E.E.C. policy. The Council to make recommendations to the Dáil and the Northern Ireland Assembly on these functions. The recommendations to be implemented by each legislative body if approved by them. All recommendations of the Council to be unanimous. The Council would have complete control in relation to tourism, existing joint inter-Government schemes, livestock, horticultural and agricultural import regulations for health and hygiene and these functions should be transferred immediately to the Council on its establishment. Additional functions, both advisory and executive, can be transferred to the Council, if there is a majority decision in favour by the Dáil, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Westminster. In the case of matters which are outside the competence of the Northern Assembly, the consent to transfer to a Council will be between Westminster and the Dáil by majority decision in each.