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Anglo-Irish Relations and the current British initiative

1. Details of the meeting on 21st May 1980 are still known only to the two major participants. It appears that they both agreed not to divulge details.
2. On our side, the view remains that an overall solution calls for the creation of a new relationship between the two islands. The content of such a relationship will have to be elaborated, but not at this stage in contacts with the British. In particular, our Embassy in London should not discuss defence/security matters in connection with a new relationship. There is to be "no flesh on the bones" at this stage, unless British views change substantially.
3. The Atkins initiative is believed to have very little chance of success. There may be a Green/White Paper by the end of this month. The SDLP will probably be firmly opposed to its content as will the Alliance Party (to lesser extent). Our approach should be to let these two parties make the running in responding to the Paper. It might be used against us if we were to take a prominent (and negative) stand against the Paper - we should rather come into the debate after the SDLP and Alliance have passed judgement. Our approach, after publication of the Paper, would be one of "more in sorrow than in anger" that the Atkins initiative did not work. At the same time, ^{current} the political process should be allowed to continue and it would be desirable if the Paper contained a few choices, so that at least political debate could continue.
4. The departure of Gerry Fitt has helped to increase the influence of persons such as Seamus Mallon inside the SDLP. The effect is to make the SDLP more insistent ^{on} now upon effective power-sharing in any devolved government and some form of Irish dimension. John Hume is attending a high-level meeting in Belfast today, the results of which are to be conveyed by Mr. Hume to Dublin.
5. The next meeting at the very high level between Dublin and London could take place in Dublin in October 1980, but this is still very wide open. (The proposed meeting in Venice later this week will take place).

9th June 1980