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NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN STORMONT CASTLE ON WEDNESDAY 6 JANUARY 1982

ANGLO-IRISH INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL

1/13  
The Council  
you might  
be consulted  
in relation  
Jan 13/82

Present:

- Miss Davies, Central Secretariat
- Mr Angel, NIO
- Dr Jack, DANI
- Dr Ramsey, DOE
- Mr Drummond, DOC
- Mr Martin, DENI
- Mr Russell, Central Secretariat
- Mr Pearson, DMS
- Mr Blatherwick, NIO
- Mr Abbott, NIO
- Mr Small, DOF
- Miss Foster, Central Secretariat

Miss O'Garra 15/1

30

Mr. Murray

PR let Dr. Slattery

Have a copy.

RS 14/1

To see please.

Rex on page 2 I am preparing a note to go to Genl. Sect. - probably over your signature. I will let you have a draft shortly.

see

RS 13/1

1. The purpose of the meeting was:-

- (a) to communicate to Departments the proposals under discussion for the Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council;
- (b) to consider the steps to be taken before the next Summit meeting, particularly on economic co-operation and "mutual understanding".

Structure of Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council

2. Mr Angel outlined the proposals under consideration on the UK scene for the structure of the Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council. These had still to be discussed with the Irish and so were very tentative. In particular, he explained that at official level it was envisaged that there might be an overall steering group with three working groups to deal with economic, security and social and cultural matters. Below that level there would also be ad hoc working groups to deal with specific tasks. Asked about the position of existing working groups such as the AIEC Communications Group Mr Angel replied that while Cabinet Office were against the idea of the proliferation of groups and sub-groups he felt that he should make the point to them that an existing group which had proved its usefulness should perhaps continue.

3. Following the publication of the report on the Joint Studies only one



approach had come from the Irish side and that was to DENI on the question of student exchanges. There had been no contact from Whitehall departments, other than a general enquiry also to DENI from DES.

#### The way forward

4. Given that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State had both stressed the potential value of economic co-operation and that a progress report on items in the Joint Studies inter alia would almost certainly be required before the next Summit, it was agreed that it would be advisable to co-ordinate departmental views on how to move forward. There could well be topics on which it would be advantageous for the appropriate UK or NI department to make the first move to choose the grounds for discussion. In other instances, it might be better to leave the topic for the Irish to raise. In some cases it was not entirely clear whether the initiative should be taken by a UK or NI department. It would be helpful to have the overall picture in order to decide centrally what pace should be set on individual topics. There might be some advantage in spacing out the business considering the difficulty the Economic Co-operation Study Group had in finding matters for discussion.
  
5. It was stressed, however, that Anglo-Irish Co-operation would not be confined to the topics identified by the Joint Study Working Groups. While those topics needed to be pursued, more subjects should be identified on an on-going basis. It was also stressed that the relationship developed at the Summit was UK-ROI. North-South Co-operation was a small part of the wider relationship. NI departments would only be principals in matters clearly lying within their range of responsibilities but would also have to co-ordinate closely with the appropriate UK departments where the latter were in the lead. In addition, it would be useful if NI departments could identify topics with potential for East-West Co-operation, for consideration by the appropriate UK departments. In the meantime, all the usual North-South activities should continue.
  
6. Against that background, it was agreed that Departments should let Central Secretariat have by 27 January on the relevant items in the Joint Studies (on Economic Co-operation and Mutual Understanding), stating the extent of the Northern Ireland interest and their views on how best to proceed including who should take the initiative ie the NI department, a UK department or where it seemed preferable the ROI. Some estimate of the priority to be given to the matter should be supplied, related to the likely benefit to Northern Ireland and the UK generally. Various examples were taken to illustrate the kind of points

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to be identified including trade promotion and the Open University.

SDLP Interest

7. Mr Hugh Logue (SDLP) had indicated that he wished to raise a number of topics for cross-border co-operation. It was not clear whether the SDLP intended to pursue these with the Secretary of State. It was agreed that officials should meet Mr Logue so that he could amplify these points. It was valuable to obtain views from outside on topics which could usefully be considered within the Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council framework.

Next Meeting

8. It was agreed to have a further meeting in mid-February by which time the FCO would have held discussions with Dublin and the form of the Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council might have become clearer.

*OLF*

SANDRA FOSTER (Miss)  
Central Secretariat

11 January 1982

- cc. Those present
- PS/PUS - M
- PS/Sir Ewart Bell
- Mr Belloch
- Mr Dugdale
- Mr Marshall - M
- Mr Burns - M
- Mr Wyatt
- Dr Hayes
- Mr Gilliland

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