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MR. ALEXANDER

Anglo-Irish Joint Studies

Lord Carrington has now seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute to the Prime Minister of 29 April and attached papers. He is content with these, subject to the two following comments:

(a) The third sentence of paragraph 8 of the draft Report on Institutional Structures seems to <sup>him</sup> ~~me~~ unsatisfactory as it stands. I have agreed with his office that his point here would be met by adding the following words at the end of the sentence: "... although these would naturally not ~~obscure~~ <sup>impinge</sup> on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland." *dismiss?*

*(I have amended  
the text.  
R.L.G.)*

(b) He recognises the symbolic importance for Mr. Haughey of the title "Council" for the proposed inter-Governmental structure, and the force of HM Ambassador in Dublin's advice on this point. But he is concerned that use of "Council" would be difficult to sell to public opinion particularly among the majority community in Northern Ireland. He would therefore prefer further Ministerial consideration of this point, before it is indicated to the Irish that a concession on it would be possible.

*Agreed*

(SIGNED) R. L. WADE-GERY

1 May 1981

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Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 May 1981

Dear Michael,

Anglo/Irish Joint Studies

You asked for the views of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Lord Privy Seal on the proposals in Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 29 April to the Prime Minister, which enclosed British drafts for the Joint Reports of the Study Groups on Institutional Structures and Citizenship.

Lord Carrington wishes to make two points on the draft on Institutional Structures. The first concerns the use of the word "Council" to describe the Anglo/Irish structure. Lord Carrington is aware of the symbolic importance of this term to Mr Haughey on which HM Ambassador at Dublin commented in his telegram No 91 of 31 March (copy enclosed for ease of reference). However, he is concerned that this term conveys the idea of a formal body and might therefore be difficult to sell to public opinion, particularly among the majority community in Northern Ireland. Given the importance of this question, Lord Carrington would prefer that there should be further Ministerial consideration of the point before it was indicated that an Irish concession on it was possible.

Lord Carrington's second point relates to paragraph 8 of the draft report of the Joint Study Group on Institutional Structures. The third sentence of this paragraph states that "the structure of the Council/Committee would impose contacts of a North/South (Dublin-Belfast) as well as an East-West (Dublin-London) nature". Lord Carrington is concerned that unless the scope of these "contacts" is defined, the suspicion could arise that we were discussing controversial matters relating to Northern Ireland without the Northern Irish being represented. I have discussed this point with Robert Wade-Gery who suggested that we should add to the sentence: "although these would naturally not impinge on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland". In the time available, I have not had an opportunity to check this

/wording



wording with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary or with officials here, but my impression is that it would meet the point that Lord Carrington would wish to make.

I am sending copies of this letter to Robert Wade-Gery and David Wright at the Cabinet Office, and to the Private Secretaries to the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Secretary of State for Defence and the Lord Privy Seal.

*Yours ever*  
*Roderic Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street

LRS 315  
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FM DUBLIN 311600Z MAR 1981

TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY F C O (010800Z )

TELEGRAM NUMBER 91 OF 31 MAR

ANGLO/IRISH JOINT STUDIES

1. I HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING ALEXANDER'S LETTER OF 19 MARCH TO WALDEN ABOUT PROGRESS IN THE JOINT STUDIES. I QUITE SEE THE DIFFICULTIES ON OUR SIDE IF THE PACE OF EVENTS SEEMS TOO SWIFT. BUT AS THE LETTER POINTS OUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SUFFICIENT PROGRESS TO ENSURE THAT MR HAUGHEY DOES NOT FEEL FORCED TO BREAK OFF THE JOINT STUDIES.
2. I AM AFRAID THAT IF WE SUGGEST TO THE IRISH AT THE NEXT MEETING THAT REFERENCE TO A COUNCIL OR A CONFERENCE BE REPLACED BY REFERENCE TO A COMMITTEE, THIS COULD WELL BE TAKEN BY THEM AS A STEP BACKWARDS. THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ANGLO-IRISH COOPERATION SOUNDS TOO MUCH LIKE THE ANGLO-IRISH COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION WHICH WHILE ACCEPTABLE AT A WORKING LEVEL HAS NO IMPACT POLITICALLY.
3. IT COULD BE DANGEROUS FOR US TO MAKE THIS CHANGE OF EMPHASIS WITHOUT BEING SURE IN ADVANCE THAT IT WOULD NOT CAUSE TOO MUCH DAMAGE AT THIS EARLY STAGE. AT THE NEXT SET OF MEETINGS, THE IRISH WILL EXPECT TO PURSUE THE DISCUSSIONS OF IDEAS ABOUT AN ANGLO-IRISH COUNCIL. IN THE LIGHT OF MR HAUGHEY'S PRESENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES IT COULD MAKE LIFE VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM IF HE HEARS THAT AN ANGLO-IRISH COUNCIL OR SOMETHING SIMILAR IS NOT A POSSIBILITY. IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT HE SEES A CLEAR CONNEXION BETWEEN SECURITY COOPERATION WITH US AND POLITICAL ADVANCE.
4. RECENTLY THE THEME OF THE EXTRA FINANCIAL COST OF SECURITY MEASURES WHICH RELATE TO THE BORDER HAS RE-EMERGED IN THE PRESS. THESE COSTS REPRESENT 15% OF THE TOTAL PROJECTED IRISH BUDGET DEFICIT THIS YEAR WHICH MUST BE WORRYING FOR MR HAUGHEY ON PURELY ECONOMIC GROUNDS. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC WILL BE HELD IN MAY/JUNE AND IT SEEMS ESSENTIAL THAT WE KEEP THE MOMENTUM OF THE JOINT STUDIES GOING TILL AFTER

*He too needs security cooperation. The need is not all on our side. He could be in danger of attacks in the south unless he has us to step out-territory.*

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/ THEN.

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THEN. IF WE CANNOT AT THIS STAGE MATCH THE IRISH MINIMUM DEMAND ON INSTITUTIONS WE SHOULD TRY AND PLAY FOR TIME. REFERENCE TO APPREHENSIONS IN THE NORTH WOULD BE WELL UNDERSTOOD AS A REASON FOR TAKING THINGS MORE SLOWLY. WHAT WE MUST AVOID IS OFFERING SOMETHING THE IRISH CANNOT ACCEPT AND NOT BEING ABLE TO IMPROVE ON IT.

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