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Prime Minister

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John Hume is not party to the
Irish ideas earlier described to us.

Prime Minister

A. J. C. ^{11.}/₁₀

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ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

Sir Robert Armstrong's minute to you of 3 October reported on the ideas which Mr Lillis of the Republic's DFA has been floating with us, allegedly with the backing of John Hume, and recorded that I expected to see John Hume shortly. I have also seen Mr Cole's minute of 7 October to Sir Robert recording your reaction.

I have now had a private discussion with John Hume. Adam Butler and Nick Scott were with me.

John Hume's proposals are certainly not the package described by Mr Lillis. His starting point is that no progress can be made unless terrorism can be beaten. That is not possible without the consent of the minority. They cannot consent unless they have confidence in the security forces. They will only have that confidence if responsibility for security is in some way shared with the South and if there is some way for Catholics to police their own areas.

Beyond this Hume's ideas are less clearly defined. Although he does not entirely rule out something less, he talks of joint sovereignty, at least as regards policing, with a separate police force operating under the tricolour in minority strongholds. He refers also to a joint police authority. He has not thought of reciprocity as regards the RUC operating in the South but would not rule it out. He professes no interest in joint judicial arrangements. He did say that the SDLP would accept majority rule without power-sharing if it got full participation by the Republic

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in law enforcement on the streets; but I am sure that he has not faced up to all the implications of either step.

Hume virtually brushed aside any possibility of the Republic amending its constitution. At the most there might be some declaratory statement putting a gloss on the offensive articles. He attached little significance to the text of the Irish constitution.

When I told Hume what Lillis had put before us as SDLP ideas he said they would be suicide for both the SDLP and parties in the Republic. I made it plain to him that it was not helpful to either Government to have his ideas misrepresented to us from the South. We were prepared to adopt an imaginative and flexible approach to security co-operation with the Republic but I would not contemplate joint sovereignty.

Hume will inform his friends in the Republic of my reaction. My meeting later this month with Peter Barry and Sir Robert Armstrong's with Mr Nally, will provide opportunities before your Summit to obtain an authoritative Irish Government view of whether there is anything left of the Lillis proposals. But Hume has shown that our initial scepticism was fully justified and that it would be wise to stand off from Mr Lillis.

I shall welcome the discussion with yourself and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary suggested in your Private Secretary's minute of 7 October to Sir Robert Armstrong, and I suggest that this might with best advantage take place after I have seen Peter Barry on 19 October. My present assessment is that the South and the SDLP are beginning to look beyond the Dublin Forum; that both are intensely worried about Sinn Fein; that they may be looking to the area of policing, rather than a Parliamentary body or power-sharing, to gain some kind of Irish dimension in Northern Ireland; and that the Forum may well come up with pressure for some form of joint sovereignty rather than simple Irish unity. Our own priority

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following the Forum may have to be to counter and campaign, here or in the United States, which suggests that some grand bargain, "solving" the Northern Ireland problem at a stroke, is available. But while John Hume's tentative prescriptions may be unacceptable, there are some sound points in his analysis and we may later be able to build on those.

I am copying this minute to Geoffrey Howe and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Derek Hill

JP
Approved by the
Secretary of State and
signed in his absence

11 October 1983

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