

Prime Minister

NORTHERN IRELAND

1. You asked this morning whether I had seen the Memorandum from Jim dated 18th March, and I replied that I had done so.
2. I am sorry to say that neither Jim's Memorandum nor the White Paper represents any improvement whatever on the proposals which Jim sets out in his earlier document, and upon which I commented in my note to you dated 15th February, of which I attach a copy.
3. These proposals will divide the Parliamentary Party. The proposals for a new Assembly are unworkable, and are doomed to failure. The whole initiative will collapse.
4. It may be said that that would not really matter. However, I attach to this note a copy of a letter of yesterday's date from Enoch, with which I agree.
5. I wish to draw your attention to the most potentially damaging part of the draft White Paper, which is Part VI, headed:-  
"Relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland."
6. The White Paper, presented by you to Parliament in November 1981 (Command No: 8414) states, on page 12:-  
"Apart from the obvious benefits of parliamentary exchanges, the Irish side saw the committee as providing a forum for the participation of representatives from Northern Ireland in the new institutional structures. They considered that, in view of the special circumstances within these islands and in order to permit the adequate

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representation of both sections of the community there, the Northern Ireland membership should be composed in proportion to the size of the different parts of the Community there and should be a significant component of the committee. In the absence of an elected Assembly in Northern Ireland, representatives could be chosen on the basis of appointment by the Secretary of State on the nomination of, or after consultation with, leaders of political parties. More generally the Irish side recognised that consultation with political interests and with the appropriate parliamentary authorities should be undertaken immediately following a decision to establish an inter-governmental body with the objective of having the group working in its new format as soon as possible.

"The Irish side saw the ambit and purposes of the committee as corresponding to those of the inter-governmental body. Its functions would essentially be consultative, advisory and review in nature. It could discuss the activities of the inter-governmental body and review the work of ancillary bodies, on the basis - but not exclusively so - of an annual report on co-operation from the inter-governmental body. Members might receive an allowance in respect of attendance."

7. You will note that the above quotation, from the document which you yourself presented to Parliament, sets out the views of the Irish side. The words quoted above do not, repeat not, reflect the views of Her Majesty's Government.
8. However, may I ask you to note, please, what has happened during the past four months? That which was recorded as having been the policy of the Irish Government in November 1981, has become, in March 1982, and become hook, line and sinker, the policy of Her Majesty's Government.
9. Para VI (4) of the draft White Paper contains the following words:  
"As the relationship between Northern Ireland and the

Republic is an important aspect of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the Republic, it would be sensible for Members of a Northern Ireland elected Assembly to have an opportunity to put their views direct in any inter-Parliamentary body which may be created. The establishment of such a body and the role it would play, are now matters for Westminster and Dublin Parliaments. The Government would expect the arrangements to enable the Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to participate if they so wished."

10. Jim's proposals about the involvement of Members of the new Assembly with the proposed "Anglo-Irish body at Parliamentary level" are dynamite. They will revive all the old fears about a Council of all Ireland. It is obvious that these paragraphs in the White Paper have been inserted in order to satisfy the SDLP and have, no doubt, been approved by Dublin, as the minimum which is required at this stage. Further demands and further concessions will, of course, follow because of the views of Civil Servants in the Foreign Office and in the Northern Ireland Office.
11. A significant number of our backbenchers, including the writer of this note, believe that these proposals go in precisely the opposite direction to the one which Airey would have followed and are likely to give encouragement to the Provisional IRA and cause dismay to decent Unionists. They will result, in my opinion, in a further accretion of strength to Paisley who will be able to exploit the paragraphs which deal with relations with the Republic.
12. I well understand what the consequences would be, but I do not see how I can vote for the Second Reading of a Bill which I consider would be gravely damaging to Northern Ireland and to the unity of this Kingdom.