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Your reference

Sir Ewart Bell KCB NIO Belfast

Our reference

Date

18 April 1983

Dear Court of Medical Control of Market of Mar

- 1. I attach a draft minute which I have prepared of your conversations at lunch. Perhaps your office could give me a ring if they are happy for me to issue this in final form, in which case I will also send it to Stephen Boys Smith in NIO London.
- 2. I also enclose a copy of a letter which I have sent to Patrick Eyers dealing with your proposed visit to the States. $\mid x \mid$

Jail DE Tatham

CONFIDENTIAL (Revised) DRAFT: TYPE: Draft/Final 1 + minute Necretic Meterory desirate on moves FROM: Reference D E Tatham TEL. NO: TO: SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Your Reference Mr Whiteway Top Secret Mr Orr o.r. Secret Copies to: Confidential Sir Ewart Bell, NIO(B) Restricted Mr Eyers, RID, FCO Unclassified PRIVACY MARKING SUBJECT: SIR EWART BELL'S VISIT Sir Ewart Bell and I had lunch with Mr Dermot Nally In Confidence (Secretary to the Government), Mr Maurice Doyle (Secretary, CAVEAT..... (Secretary, Department of Finance) and Mr Sean C Department of Foreign Affairs) on Friday 15 April. Before the lunch, Sir Ewart and I agreed that we should try to cover the Assembly, the Forum for a New Ireland, and the Republic's economic scene. By and large we succeeded, although Sir Ewart had to steer the conversation which tended to degenerate into inconsequential chat. The Assembly 2. Sir Ewart spoke of the work of the Assembly, the increased burden placed on the NICS, and the quantity and, more important, quality of the work which the Assembly and its Committees were producing. In general the Assembly was working at least as well - given its problems - as we could have hoped. But the more thinking Unionists were now concerned about the next stage. It was apparent to almost Enclosures-flag(s)..... all of them that HMG would not change the ground rules, so to achieve devolved powers it would be necessary to bring the SDLP into the Assembly. Speculating, and in answer to a question from Mr Nally, Sir Ewart said that, after a CONFIDENTIAL /British

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British election, it might be possible to see how the SDLP wish to fit the Assembly into a wider framework could be accommodated and clearly both sides would have to work closely together.

3. We discussed the prospects for the SDLP in the General Election (which the Irish thought was most likely in October). Both sides agreed that Messrs Adams and Carren would probably be elected for Sinn Fein and that Mr Hume and possibly one or two others would get in for the SDLP. But everything depended on how many Nationalist and Unionist candidates stood.

Irish side told us how things stood after the initial meeting of party leaders on 14 April. Nothing had been concluded because Mr Haughey wished to consult his Fianna Fail colleagues, but a second meeting on 21 April should enable firm arrangements to be made. The number of members which the forum would have was still in doubt. although it would probably be in multiples of four say between 16 and 40. It was not clear whether the parties would be represented in equal numbers (although they probably will be since no one will wish to be hard ill be JR Tobin Clark of the Senate The Secretary and some of the Secretariat of the forum will be drawn from Parliamentary civil servants (the staff of the Oireachtas) although members of normal Government Departments will probably also be drafted in. It is at least agreed that the forum will meet in Dublin Castle and the expenses should be minimal as only the SDLP will have to be paid travel and subsistence.

- would develop. While general sessions might be open, sub-committees would be established to cover various topics and these could well meet in closed session. Submissions from outsiders would certainly be welcome and the Irish hoped these would include Unionist views. They certainly expected the churches to contribute. (The DFA had hoped that the Alliance Party would send a submission but after Mr Napier's speech on 16 April this seems less likely.) The Irish spoke very warmly about the educational value of Mr John McCartney's visit to Dublin in 1981 and hoped that he would consider another trip. Sir Ewart pointed out that given the criticism this would arouse from entrenched Unionist opinion it was unlikely to happen at least until a British election was over.
- 6. The Irish side pointed out that clear differences of view still remained among the political parties which would comprise the forum. Dr FitzGerald's conception of it was far less nationalist than that of either Mr Haughey or Mr Hume: there was a real danger that Mr Haughey would simply use it as another platform from which to expound Republican views. However it developed, the Government were determined they should report before the end of the year. While they hoped for a unanimous report they could not be sure of getting one.

The Irish Economy

7. Mr Doyle had little new to say on this topic, though he did suggest sardonically that the public debate between the Tanaiste, Mr Spring and the Minister of Finance, Mr Dukes, might have been a ritual dance intended to assure

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their party supporters that they were fighting their respective corners vigorously.

US Embassy

8. Sir Ewart also called on the US Ambassador and gave him a useful briefing on the state of Northern Ireland.

There was some discussion of Sir Ewart's own visit to North America in May which I am pursuing separately.