

176/8

99/92

FROM: P N BELL, AUS(L)
5 August 1992

Mr Watkins

D for file with other papers 77/10

*1. cc Mr Lowdell
2. Mr Maxwell
Mr H. C. Cuthbert*

*HSW
6.8*

cc PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Carvill
Mr Ledlie
Mr Thomas
Mr Alston
Mr Chesterton
Mr Lyon
Mr Shannon
Mr Steele
Mr Cooke
Mr Cornick
Mr D A Hill
Mr D J R Hill
Mr Leach
Mr Maccabe
Mr Petch
Mr Rickard
Mr Lavery
Miss Mills
Mr White
Ms Lodge
Mr Caine
Mr Archer, RID
HMA, Dublin

ASST./ SEC 46/8
- 5 AUG 1992
G.C.R.U.

BUILDING LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITIES

I am most grateful both to you and all those others who have commented most helpfully on my minute of 26 June. I am encouraged both by the number and quality of links with universities which apparently exist in many areas of Government in Northern Ireland, though less perhaps, one regrets to say, in areas of particular interest to the political and constitutional side of the NIO. That is why, in the light of these exchanges, I am encouraged to press on with my modest initiative in 'thickening' our particular relationship with the universities - above all to learn what is going on there that has a bearing on helping resolve the NI 'problem' through political and constitutional means but also to demonstrate that we ourselves may have a valuable contribution to make.

SMJ/AUSL/19687

2. I fully accept, however, the points made about possible dangers of confusion from having a multiplicity of links with universities, or attempting to do what the experience of others suggests will either not be profitable (a 'clearing house'), or which cuts across work already in hand. Like Mr Thomas, I doubt if the risk of confusion is all that great in reality, or that we cannot proceed in a way that minimises the dangers, in particular given that our main objective is to increase our own contact and interchange with the universities - while fully recognising some parts of the Office already enjoy a great deal of fruitful contact, and may, from their own different perspective - not least in the commissioning of research - be wanting to develop their own relations further.

3. The way forward now, I suggest, would be for a short meeting of the key players which we could perhaps set up after my return from leave in early September. I shall, therefore, ask my secretary to make the necessary arrangements.

(Signed PNB)

P N BELL
OAB 6469

SMJ/AUSL/19687

From: W J HODGES, DANI
28 July 1992



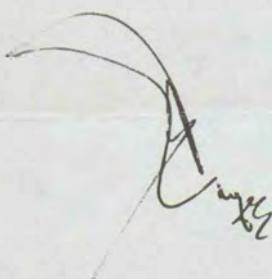
W J Hodges
cc: PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Mr Fell
NI Permanent Secretaries
Mr Thomas
Mr Watkins
Mr D Hill, ESL
Mr Kirkpatrick, DANI
Dr McMurray, DANI

MR P N BELL, AUS, NIO(L):

BUILDING LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITIES

1. Thank you for copying to me your minute of 26 June 1992 to Mr Thomas on this subject. As you are no doubt aware, this Department has considerable links with Universities. Not only do we have a unique relationship with a University insofar as the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science at Queen's is concerned, but DANI also has extensive academic links on a world-wide basis to both Universities and research organisations. While we find such links invaluable in keeping us abreast of developments and allowing us to draw on, and contribute to, developments as appropriate, I am less clear as to what precisely the NIO hopes to gain from a closer involvement on its part. It may be axiomatic that closer links are a good thing, but I think that NIO needs to have a clear objective for the exercise. That said, I agree that the NIO should tap into whatever expertise is available on matters which are of pressing concern.
2. Drawing on our experience, the following comments on the paper may be of some help. First of all, I would agree with the aim of developing links as outlined in paras 3.2 and 4.6.
3. At para 5.3 and again at 6.4, the difficulty of how closely an organisation may wish to be identified with Government is highlighted. This has also been a problem in the USA, where universities have been reluctant to be identified with some (particularly defence-related) Government-funded research. It is possible to devise mechanisms to overcome this, for example, by operating through a third party, but that can bring its own problems.

4. I would share your reservations (and those of John Dowdall) as to the potential of "shadowing". Leaving aside the security considerations, I have some doubts as to whether this would be attractive to experienced academics.
5. I would also question the effectiveness of establishing a person to act as an official link. It is an option which has been adopted by some commercial companies but there is a danger of the link becoming little more than a "post-box" because of the need to work at a fairly high level across diverse interests. In addition, it would probably take time and money to develop the links to a functional level.
6. The option of conferences, working lunches and seminars would seem to have considerable potential, although I have to say that, in our experience, the costs are considerably higher than those quoted by the University of Liverpool in Annex C. Expenses would increase considerably if international delegates were to be invited to participate. We find that the presence of Ministers lends status to such occasions and they would not need to attend throughout the event.
7. In addition to the options identified in your paper, you could consider setting up a Consultative Group. In that way, views could be sought from a diverse range of sources in confidence. It would also have the benefit of ensuring continuity.
8. These are just some initial thoughts on the subject but if you would like some elaboration I or my Chief Scientific Officer, Cecil McMurray, will be happy to provide it.



W J HODGES
Permanent Secretary

236/7

99/92

ASST./
SEC
30 JUL 1992
C.C.R.U.

762/7
24 JUL 1992
CENT SEC

R.

FROM: P CARVILL
DENI

Date: 22 July 1992

cc PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Mr Fell
NI Perm Secs
Mr Ledlie
Mr Thomas
Mr Dowdall
Mr Holmes
Mr Watkins

Mr Bell

Mr McEusker

BUILDING LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITIES

D. ~~It~~ is there a file for these papers. ^{could I have} 31/7

1. Thank you for sight of your minute of 26 June and the attached draft paper, together with the invitation to comment thereon.

2. There appear to be two main aspects to the initiative. The first, to which you refer specifically in your minute, is the strengthening of links with those in the academic world who have the potential to contribute to the development of NIO policy. Each NI Department has such contacts. However, one concern which emerged in the course of our recent deliberations on the future funding of research in QUB and UU was that Departments' research needs and academic contacts were not always all that well articulated or co-ordinated. This has led to a recommendation, endorsed in recent weeks by PCC and Mr Hanley, that a standing Interdepartmental Research Group should be established to provide a co-ordinated input from Government "customers" to the process of planning, funding and evaluating higher education research in Northern Ireland.

3. The Group is likely to have a strong continuing dialogue with both local universities, a process which we plan to launch with a one-day seminar - probably in early November - led by Professor Howard Newby, currently Chairman of both the Economic and Social Research Council and the Northern Ireland Committee of UFC. Although the Group's focus will be predominantly on the two local institutions, you may wish to consider whether NIO representation on the Group - and involvement in the seminar - might provide a basis for the local dimension of your initiative.

4. Another relevant development is a programme which we are running, in conjunction with ESRC, to strengthen the local research base in the economic and social sciences. This is being taken forward by a series of jointly funded research seminars, involving speakers from institutions in NI, GB and overseas, to be organised by the two local universities over the 1992-93 and 1993-94 academic years. The proposed topics:

- Management of Violent Conflict;
- Education and Affirmative Action;
- Women and Political and Economic Participation;
- Peripheral Regions and European Integration;
- Urban Regeneration; and
- Competitiveness of the Irish Economies

have been chosen with an eye to both local research interests and relevance to public policy. As well as their academic objectives, they ought to provide some useful link-building opportunities for the relevant government Departments. More generally, we have an excellent relationship with ESRC (including a supportive and interested Chairman) which ought to be capable of being turned to wider advantage, as suggested in PUS's note of 29 June.

5. The initiative's second aspect, mentioned in the draft paper and stressed by PUS, is that of raising the image of the Civil Service among opinion formers in the academic community. This - and its recruitment implications - featured prominently in Sir Robin Butler's original March 1991 letter on the subject. While, with the advantages of scale mentioned in previous exchanges, the NI Departments may not have as many difficulties on this score with the local institutions as some of their Whitehall counterparts, we cannot afford to be complacent about the quality of our graduate recruits. Given that some 40% of NI entrants to higher education - including a significant proportion of the most highly-qualified school leavers - opt to study at GB institutions, the NICS must have at least as high a recruitment stake as the NIO in raising our collective image among the universities in Britain. There would thus appear to be a case for involving the NI Departments as well as the NIO in this wider image-building part of the process.

6. Finally, I append a few comments on and detailed amendments to the references in the Annexes to your draft paper.

Carvill

P CARVILL

DEVELOPING LINKS WITH THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

ANNEXES A & B: ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

ANNEX A

Constitutional and Political Affairs

Prof Kevin Boyle has indeed moved from Galway to Essex

"Jordanstown" should be "University of Ulster"

QUB - Prof Paul Compton

The United Nations University Research Centre will not exist until 1996 at the earliest and is planned to subsume the UU Centre for the Study of Conflict.

TCD - Prof Joseph Lee

UU - Dr Tony Gallagher has moved to QUB

Criminology & Legal Matters

Manchester - Prof Ken Pease

QUB - Prof Desmond Greer

Security and Prisons

"NUU" should read "University of Ulster"

ANNEX B

Page 1 - Dr T Gallagher has moved to QUB

Page 2 - Dr E P Moxon-Browne has moved to Limerick and become Professor



99/92

UNDER/ SEC 384/7
-8 JUL 1992
CENT SEC

D.
To assent
with papers
STORMONT
BELFAST
BT4 3SW
7/10/92

FROM: J M Dowdall

cc PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Thomas
NI Perm Secs
Mr Watkins
Mr D Hill - ESL
Mr Hewitt
Mr Jardine

DATE: 7 July 1992

1. cc Mr Lyon
Mr Maxwell

2. ~~Mr McLaughlin (19)~~

HJ

F.T

-OK-

Mr Bell

BUILDING LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITIES

1. I have seen your minute of 26 June 1992 to Mr Thomas on this subject and I have a few comments to offer.
2. I can certainly see the potential value of developing more interaction between NIO and the academic community. In doing so, it may be helpful for you to be aware of the current volume of traffic between Government Departments and academic institutions both in Northern Ireland and in GB. DFP, and possibly other NI Departments, have cultivated networks of communication with a range of academics.
3. Within DFP, PPRU has developed very good links with various universities as well as with independent research centres such as the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre and the Policy Studies Institute in London. These links have proved useful and it would be sensible for any further more formal structures for interacting with HE institutions to take them into account.
4. Your paper identified a number of models for building links. PPRU has had some useful experience in both inward and outward secondments and Victor Hewitt on the Economics side and Edgar Jardine on the Statistics and Social Research side would be happy to share their experience of managing such arrangements. I do, however, share the reservations about the potential of "shadowing" as a means of promoting good working contacts between Government and academics.
5. I also wonder about the effectiveness of designating a senior official as a link between academics and departmental staff. It is unlikely that one individual could adequately cover the range of a Department's responsibilities and normal mobility of officials would fail to provide the desirable continuity. The suggestion of conferences, seminars and working lunches around themes or topics of mutual interest would seem to offer a more

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-8 JUL 1992
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art



STORMONT
BELFAST
BT4 3SW

practical focus for establishing and building on links between officials and academics. The reference in your note to the development of the community relation strategy in this respect by CCRU/PPRU is a good example.

6. You might also like to be aware of a proposal which our Economics Division is currently pursuing which would provide academics with small amounts of seed-corn funding to do literature reviews, undertake visits and present reports or to prepare presentations for senior officials. This has the benefit of directing academics into areas of particular interest to Government and of providing an opportunity to assess their "value-added" before entering more substantial contracts.
7. I hope these comments are helpful. If, at any stage you wish to discuss PPRU's experience in this area, I would be happy to arrange this.

.p.p. Mrs C Mub

J M DOWDALL

7 July 1992

EJ2935CM

FROM: Q J THOMAS, DUS(L)
7 July 1992
DUSL/MR/31984

UNDER/ 294/7
SEC
-7 JUL 1992
CENT SEC

MR BELL

99/92

- cc PS/PUS(L&B)
- PS/Mr Fell(L&B)
- Mr Carvill
- Mr Ledlie
- Mr Alston(L&B)
- Mr Chesterton
- Mr Lyon
- Mr Shannon
- Mr Steele
- Mr Cooke
- Mr Cornick
- Mr D A Hill
- Mr D J R Hill
- Mr Leach
- Mr Maccabe
- Mr Petch
- Mr Watkins
- Mr Rickard
- Mr Lavery
- Miss Mills
- Mr White
- Ms Lodge
- Mr Caine
- Mr Archer RID/FCO
- HMA Dublin
- Mr Jardine PPRU

ASST/ 82/67
SEC
-8 JUL 1992
C.C.R.U.

Dr McCloskey 2/7
Mr McCloskey O/R

D.
To arrange
with other
papers
7/15/7

BUILDING LINKS WITH UNIVERSITIES

Thank you for your minute of 26 June about your work on developing contacts with universities.

2. I have also seen comments from PUS, Mr Lyon and Mr Watkins. I imagine you will be responding to the idea of a short meeting to ensure that there is no danger of any confusion from having a multiplicity of links with universities on the one hand and the NIO, and indeed Northern Ireland Departments, on the other. I doubt if the risk of confusion is all that great, or at least that we cannot proceed in a way that minimises the dangers, in particular against the background that our main objective is to increase the contact and interchange with the universities, without denying that some parts of the office already enjoy a

good deal of fruitful contact.

3. Apart from our wider departmental interest in this, on some of which PUS has commented, I am conscious, as I know you are, of the great range of academic interest there is, whether it stems primarily from history, political science or other social science based interest in such matters as conflict resolution, in the Northern Ireland "problem" and in particular on the possibilities of helping it through political and constitutional means. It is in that field in particular that I see benefits both in our learning from the thinking that is going on in universities and, as PUS points out, in our demonstrating to this once important intellectual community that the NIO itself has some contribution to make.

4. I too am happy to be played in, as appropriate, in any informal gatherings to develop contacts and explain our point of view.

[DICTATED BY MR THOMAS & SIGNED IN HIS ABSENCE: Marie Rebello]

Q J THOMAS
7 July 1992
OAB 6447

Mr McCusker 7/7

DJW/7/7

FROM: D J WATKINS
US CENT SEC
DATE: 3 JULY 1992

CC: PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Carvill
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Alston - B
Mr Chesterton - B
Mr Lyon - B
Mr Shannon - B
Mr Steele - B
Mr Cooke - B
Mr Cornick
Mr D A Hill - B
Mr D J R Hill - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Petch - B
Mr Rickard - B
Mr Lavery
Miss Mills - B
Mr White - B
Ms Lodge - B
Mr Caine - B
Mr Archer, RID - B
HMA, Dublin - B
Mr Jardine, PPRU
(with back papers)

D.
Rosemary may wish
to hold for the proposed
meeting 7/7

ASST./
SEC
- 3 JUL 1992
C.C.R.U.
50/7

Mr Bell - B

BUILDING LINKS WITH UNIVERSITIES

1. Thank you for copying me your minute of 26 June and the draft paper on developing further links with the academic community.
2. The paper now takes fully into account the views which CCRU offered about its own position within the structure

DJW/RJ/11823

and also the quite extensive links which it has established with the academic community in Northern Ireland.

3. Your suggestion for the development of further informal and sensitive links with academics may well be the right way to proceed and we in Central Secretariat and CCRU would be more than happy to offer any advice about our networks and to join in any discussions if you think that would be appropriate. But Mr Lyon's minute of 29 June seems to raise cogent points. I suggest that a short meeting might be helpful to agree the necessary joint approach. If one were held, I would strongly argue for the inclusion of Mr Jardine (PPRU) who has a good working knowledge of linkages with universities in fields spanning your, Mr Lyon's and my interests.

MJ
-

D J WATKINS

DJW/RJ/11823

99/92



cc: Mr Maxwell

From: Mr T McCusker

1 July 1992

To: Mr D J Watkins

BUILDING LINKS WITH UNIVERSITIES

1. This document from Mr Bell has taken into account the comments which CCRU made about the original paper. In particular it now acknowledges that CCRU is not part of the NIO and takes due account of the already extensive networks which we have built up with universities.
2. On the way ahead, I think it has to be informal and very sensitive and the idea of some informal lunches and dinners seems a good way to start. However, I think we need to be careful that we do not establish some kind of twin track approach to the universities and that we should aim for the involvement of some NI faces in these exchanges.
3. I am attaching a short draft reply to Peter Bell which simply acknowledges the fact that he has taken account of our views and that we would be more than happy to contribute further to the debate and join in any informal dialogue which they propose.

T McCUSKER

TMcC2461/6/92

DRAFT

cc: PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Carvill
Mr Ledlie
Mr Alston
Mr Chesterton
Mr Lyon
Mr Shannon
Mr Steele
Mr Watkins
Mr Cooke
Mr Cornick
Mr D A Hill
Mr D J R Hill
Mr Leach
Mr Maccabe
Mr Petch
Mr Rickard
Mr Lavery
Miss Mills
Mr White
Ms Lodge
Mr Caine
Mr Archer, RID
HMA, Dublin

From: D J Watkins

July 1992

To: Mr P N Bell
AUS, (L)

BUILDING LINKS WITH UNIVERSITIES

1. Thank you for copying me your note of 26 June and the draft paper on developing further links with the academic community.
2. I think the paper now takes fully into account the views which CCRU offered about its own position within the structure and also the quite extensive links which it has established with the academic community in Northern Ireland.
3. I think your suggestion for the development of further informal and sensitive links with academics is the right

way to proceed and we in Central Secretariat and CCRU would be more than happy to offer any advice about our networks and to join in any discussions if you think that would be appropriate.

D J WATKINS

TMCC2461/6/92

FROM:

J M LYON
AUS (CRIMINAL JUSTICE)
29 June 1992

D
To hold for
other papers 7/17

cc PS/PUS (B&L) - B
PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Carvill
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Alston - B
Mr Chesterton - B
Mr Shannon
Mr Steele - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Cooke - B
Mr Cornick
Mr D A Hill - B
Mr D J R Hill - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Petch - B
Mr Rickard - B
Mr Lavery
Miss Mills
Mr White
Ms Lodge - B
Mr Caine - B
Mr Archer, RID - B
HMA, Dublin - B

1432/6

Mr Howell
Mr McFadden

Mr Bell - B

BUILDING LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITIES

Thank you for copying to me your note of 26 June to Mr Thomas with the draft paper about developing links with the academic community.

2. I think there are very considerable attractions in what you propose, but there are also dangers. The paper suggests a rather informal structure with yourself as the designated senior official acting as a link between academics and departmental staff. Your immediate tasks, set out in section 8, would include informal soundings with university departments and working lunches or dinners with Vice-Chancellors and senior academics.

ASST./
SEC
- 1 JUL 1992
C.C.R.U.

3. Unless this activity is carefully co-ordinated with the existing departmental structures, it could spread confusion and duplicate effort. Your ideas, of course, go wider than the development of an NIO research strategy, or the identification of research projects which might be put out to contract. But your general discussions would have to have regard to both those matters; and the result of those discussions should help to inform that work.

4. At present, the NIO's research effort here is co-ordinated by the Statistics and Research Committee. It is chaired by me and serviced by the Statistics and Research Branch which is part of the Criminal Justice Policy Division. A significant part of the Committee's work is to identify possible gaps in the Department's research knowledge and to consider how they might best be filled. That includes seeking to interest universities in particular projects or areas of concern.

5. At the same time, as the paper recognises, I and the Criminal Justice Policy Division have been pursuing whether we need to improve the quality and depth of criminological work here in Northern Ireland, and, if so, how best to do so. (In that regard, you may wish to add Professor Browne of Queens and Dr Osborne of UU to your list of Departmental contacts: I have had meetings with both.) This work is rather different from that addressed in your paper since we need first to help generate the capability before strengthening our links into it. As you know, this work has involved just the sort of informal soundings you have referred to in section 8 of your paper (as well as commissioned work from Professor Pease) and is now likely to lead on to initially informal meetings with the Vice-Chancellors (as also suggested in your section 8).

6. You and I may end up beating a path to some of the same doors. This leads me to suggest that, if we are to open up a separate front in your command, we shall need to speak in

advance of you going into battle. Secondly, assuming you and colleagues can distinguish sufficiently your initiatives from the work and responsibilities of the Statistics and Research Committee, it might be helpful if you were to establish a separate committee to consider your own work programme and to ensure that it was co-ordinated with initiatives elsewhere in the office. Alternatively, we could add your interests to the Research Committee's agenda.

(Signed)

J M LYON

EXT DH 2442

*D hold for return of
papers from DTW*

UNDER/ 21/7
SEC
- 1 JUL 1992
CENT SEC

FROM: PUS
29 JUNE 1992

cc. PS/Mr Fell - B
Mr Carvill - B
Mr Ledlie - B
Mr Thomas - B
Mr Alston - B
Mr Chesterton - B
Mr Lyon - B
Mr Shannon
Mr Steele
Mr Watkins
Mr Cooke - B
Mr Cornick
Mr D A Hill - B
Mr D J R Hill - B
Mr Leach - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Mr Petch - B
Mr Rickard - B
Mr Lavery o/a
Miss Mills - B
Mr White
Ms Lodge - B
Mr Caine - B
Mr Archer, RID, FCO - B
HMA Dublin - B

ASST/ 17/7
SEC
- 1 JUL 1992
C.C.R.U.

MR BELL - B

BUILDING LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITIES

I am very grateful to you and Ms Lodge for the draft strategy paper. I very much welcome this work, and have felt keenly the loss (looked at from the Home Office and for a couple of years in the mid-80s from the Cabinet Office) of the very close and sometimes fruitful working relationships which the Home Office had with academia. It has been something of a surprise to find how relatively restricted the NIO's academic contacts have been, though it is perfectly understandable as the paper points out.

2. So far as our own objectives go, I think that that described in 3.1.g of the draft paper - enhancing the reputation of the NIO - is of real importance. It is not just a matter of collective self-gratification. The acceptability to high quality recruits of the NIO, the authority it can attach to its initiatives, and even to some degree its standing in Whitehall and Westminster can all be of measureable value and capable of being enhanced by developing well-chosen links with the academic world.

3. Other thoughts which your paper prompted were:

- (i) in the constitutional and political field, there looks to be a rising market in devolution stocks (and associated shares in constitutional matters - one might even whisper Bill of Rights) where there is probably more current expertise and accessible recent work in the NIO than anywhere else in the Government system;
- (ii) in the criminal justice sphere, where I am very pleased to see developments taking place, the relatively small and compact scale of Northern Ireland and the generally good relations between the different services in the criminal justice system make possible initiatives and trials which could simply prove too troublesome in England and Wales (with its very similar system of law and institutions, by contrast with Scotland's very separate system);
- (iii) quite apart from the necessarily very limited resources which we might be able to deploy in support of work with the academic community, we may need to look at how best we can exert leverage on the mainstream research and associated funding for universities on topics of particular interest to Northern Ireland. The ESRC comes to mind especially. If we are seen to be potentially influential in unlocking central Government funding, it could add a lot to the range and seriousness of purpose of the academic contacts we make.

4. Finally, I should be delighted to play a part in, for example, hosting one or two informal lunches or dinners, and already (like others) have a friendly acquaintance with the two Vice-Chancellors in Northern Ireland - though clearly we should want to spread our wings wider in London or the academic world in Britain.



J A CHILCOT

29 JUNE 1992

JEN/L/6/61/34317

FROM: P N BELL, AUS(L)
26 June 1992



Mr Thomas

cc PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Carvill
Mr Ledlie
Mr Alston
Mr Chesterton
Mr Lyon
Mr Shannon
Mr Steele
Mr Watkins
Mr Cooke
Mr Cornick
Mr D A Hill
Mr D J R Hill
Mr Leach
Mr Maccabe
Mr Petch
Mr Rickard
Mr Lavery o/a
Miss Mills
Mr White
Ms Lodge
Mr Caine
Mr Archer, RID
HMA, Dublin

1. cc Mr Maxwell

Para 2.1 of the attached pp.
refers to an initiative by Sir
M. Butler: did we respond
for NI dept. (as opposed to NIO);
or have we still to do so?
Shd. Mr Bell's note be replicated,
as suitably amended, for NI dept.;
or is this sufficient for NIO alone?
M. advise.

2. Mr Mc Lush

Grateful for a draft response
if/as appropriate, pl. *PNB*

29.6

BUILDING LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITIES

You know that I have been discussing informally, with both London based colleagues and some academics, how NIO might thicken our links with those in the academic world who might have something to contribute to development of policy or its implementation in areas of especial interest to us. The attached 'path breaking' draft paper (for which I am indebted to Ms Lodge) offers a review of existing contacts; some preliminary ideas on what we might expect again from closer links; and which avenues might be most usefully pursued.

2. The list of existing and potential contacts identified in the paper and its Annexes is not, however exhaustive. Additions (and corrections) from colleagues will, therefore, be gratefully received. However, we have sufficient already to make a start in terms of following up one or two promising lines, rather than making

SMJ/AUSL/18730

the identification of contacts (including a list of those whom we should do better to avoid) a major exercise in itself. Thus, we already have a good relationship with the Institute of Irish Studies in Liverpool (who have floated the idea of Workshops on NI themes where officials and academics might mingle), and I hope to discuss the potential for collaboration with the Department of Politics at Queen's next week (following a request for help from them to PUS). Too much formality, or too elaborate plans seem better avoided for the time being; it would be quite a prize to be able to exchange views with those whom, in Mr Ledlie's happy phrase, we can safely 'discuss the undiscussable'. Equally, although there is no question of this exercise involving a large outlay, we want to keep such modest expenses as we do incur as modest as possible.

3. Although this is essentially an NIO exercise, I trust we can benefit from relationships which other parts of the system currently enjoy with Academe (and vice versa). I think in particular of the flourishing relationship that the Central Secretariat currently has with the UU Institute for the Study of Conflict. It is also possible, for instance, that we may profit from the establishment in Northern Ireland of a UN University Research Centre, majoring on the study of ethnic conflict where I believe the NIO has a potentially strong interest.

4. In short, I should be grateful for your views (and those of copy recipients) on any aspect of the attached paper - above all for advice on how to take things forward most profitably. My aim would be to take forward the action set out in section 8 and to circulate a final paper with minimal delay.

(Signed PNB)

P N BELL
OAB 6469

SMJ/AUSL/18730