

**Paul Silk meeting with Lord Rowe-Beddoe
10 July 2013**

Lord Rowe-Beddoe raised the following points:

- It was noted that there was a preoccupation with Scotland in Westminster. As a member of the Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, he had recently been involved in the report on *The Economic Implications for the United Kingdom of Scottish Independence*, which ~~had concluded~~^{set out} that Scotland would not be economically viable as an independent state. Even if Scotland did not become independent, it was likely that further powers would be devolved there. This was in Scotland, and also probable in Wales.
- The general approach to governance (such as devolution, the West Lothian Question, or the desirability or otherwise of regional agencies within England) was piecemeal, with an increasing risk of antagonising England. A constitutional convention was desirable to develop a written constitution setting out a federal system for the United Kingdom. A roadmap was desired to set out the future of the United Kingdom.
- The Federal Republic of Germany and the United States were given as two examples suggesting that dispersal of power need not hinder economic strength. Additionally, with a written constitution, constitutional changes were made in a way that was widely noticed and debated. Recent changes that could be seen as constitutional, such as the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, had been fairly low-key.
- The Commission was encouraged to not shrink from calling for a fair funding allocation, and he recommended meeting Lord Barnett, who had seen the current funding mechanism purely as an interim measure.
- On infrastructure, it was felt that Wales, like Whitehall, had a number of long-standing decisions to make, and that a rail link to Cardiff Airport¹ and improvements to the M4 were priorities. The mooted Hafren barrage^{*}, which faced opposition from Bristol Port, had been initially proposed many years ago, when the costs would have been far lower. There was concern at the reduction in energy supply from 2015.
- There was some concern that differentiation of policy from the UK Government's was pursued to little benefit, particularly in education.
- On parliamentary relations, the presence of a Lords Minister in the Wales Office was helpful.

¹ Lord Rowe-Beddoe declared an interest