

Have not been through in quite the same detail as last time - but it seems much better.

Prime Minister
before
After that amended draft

Ref: A02365
Have marked out a two detailed items but they are not very significant.

CONFIDENTIAL Should be circulated to Cabinet?
Prime Minister.

Para 3.39
Then amended
AM

PRIME MINISTER

If you think that the points set out in paragraph 4 below will lead to a better representation at Westminster, you may prefer paragraph 3.39 to be dropped from the paper and the question to be raised orally: if the paper goes round with this paragraph in, I fear there is a real risk of it leading. AM 18/6

Government of Northern Ireland:
Proposals for further Discussion

In your summing up of the OD discussion on 10th June, you said that the draft document for publication, setting out the Government's proposals for future discussion regarding the future government of Northern Ireland, "required amendment in order to remove its negative features and avoid the impression that the Government's longer term policy was to give Northern Ireland away". You went on to say that it was important "that the paper should be considered very carefully in relation to its possible effects on the situation in Scotland." You also said that "reference should also be included to the need to reconsider the level of Northern Ireland representation at Westminster if the proposals were agreed."

2. On the first point, the Cabinet Office and the Northern Ireland Office have gone through the paper line by line, and Sir Kenneth Stowe and I have ourselves gone over it together. I hope and believe that the redraft which I attach deals with the difficulties which you had over the earlier version and removes the grounds for the objections which you saw to it.

3. The paper has also been reviewed for its possible effects in relation to Scotland. I understand that the Scottish Office is content with it in its new form; I have gone through it again with this consideration in mind, and I think that it minimises the hostages to fortune on that front.

4. The draft includes, at paragraph 3.39, a paragraph in square brackets about the implications of the proposals for Northern Ireland representation at Westminster. This is in square brackets for consideration by the Cabinet. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will want to argue that neither this paragraph nor the thought should be included in the published document. He believes that it would have devastating effects upon the reception of the Government's proposals: the Opposition at Westminster would denounce it; some Leaders of the official Unionists would use it as an argument for opposing

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the Government's proposals on the ground that it was representation at Westminster they preferred; the DUP would see it as treachery; and all the worries of the Unionists might be compounded if it was greeted by the SDLP and the Government of the Republic of Ireland as a constructive proposal indicating that the ties between Northern Ireland and Great Britain were to be loosened rather than strengthened.

5. Apart from this one point, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is content with this draft. Subject to any comments you may have on the revised draft, the Secretary of State will now circulate it to the Cabinet for consideration on 26th June, under cover of a note which will explain in general terms the changes that have been made and will deal in particular with the difficulties he sees about including a paragraph on Northern Ireland representation at Westminster on the lines suggested.

6. I am sending copies of this minute and of the revised draft to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.



(Robert Armstrong)

17th June 1980