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From: The Rt. Hon. J. ENOCH POWELL, M.B.E., M.P.,

House of Commons,
London, S.W.1.

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28th November 1983

c Mr Goodall

Dear Sir Robert,

Thank you for your personal letter of 14th November under reference A083/3233.

I may have caused the misapprehension which underlies your second paragraph when I spoke in my speech of 28th October of the "embarrassingly candid conversations which the Secretary of State pretends still to believe never took place". I assumed this would be understood to mean that he continued to deny not that any conversations took place at all, but that the conversations took place as recorded by Mr Sloan.

As regards Mr Goodall, I can only say, on the point of fact, that "others who were present have confirmed to me" that he did make the remark I attributed to him or words to that effect. Nor do I find that surprising, since the effect of the remark accords with so much other evidence which has recently become public on U.K. policy objectives in relation to the Irish Republic and Ulster.

As regards the matter of confidentiality, I do not consider it in the public interest that civil servants should be free under the seal of confidence to air views and float ideas which either differ from those of their ministers or which their ministers would not publicly avow. Least of all do I approve of this in the presence of members of other governments.

I am of course under no illusion as to the seriousness of the step which a senior Privy Councillor takes in publicly quoting views and statements attributed to named civil servants. I would not have taken it unless I believed that by doing so I might help to prevent courses of action which I regard as calculated to betray the national interest.

*Yours sincerely,
J. Enoch Powell*

Sir Robert Armstrong, GCB, CVO,
Cabinet Office,
70 Whitehall,
London, S.W.1.