

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

File A21 2
✓ N10
✓ Hidden - Ian Gow

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN
MR GEOFFREY SLOAN AND MR CLIVE ABBOTT

10/12 I have shown the Prime Minister your minute of 11 November (A082/0077), and Mr Gow has also let me have his comments on it.

The Prime Minister would be content that you should write to Mr Enoch Powell in the terms of the short draft attached to your minute offering to send him the note of the meeting, on a Privy Counsellor basis, but proposing that it should be shown to Mr Molyneux only.

As regards the note of the meeting itself, the Prime Minister has queried Mr Powell's reference to the communique of a meeting held on 7 October 1979. There was a meeting held on 5 October 1979 between British Ministers and Ministers of the Irish Republic, but it did not contain a paragraph 8 or the words which Mr Powell is recorded as quoting from it. Mr Gow's recollection is that Mr Powell was not purporting to quote verbatim from the communique at his meeting with you.

On the second letter to Mr Powell attached to your minute, the Prime Minister has commented that she would be content to stick to the factual statement at the beginning of the last sentence of paragraph 7 that "Ministers have not entered into any such agreements or understandings", but would prefer to delete the expression of opinion in the latter part of that sentence. The latter part of the sentence of course goes to the heart of Mr Powell's allegations, and you will no doubt want to consider this point further.

In paragraph 8 of the draft letter, the Prime Minister would prefer that the last complete sentence on page 8, ending with the words

"relevant considerations"

should be deleted.

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In paragraph nine, Mr Gow has commented that the middle sentence - "The proposal was not made for the purpose of providing a Northern Ireland component for some Anglo-Irish inter-Parliamentary body" is a dangerous one, since Mr Powell may be able to refer to statements that this was at least one of the Assembly's advantages. Mr Gow has suggested deleting the last two sentences of that paragraph and substituting

"So far as any Anglo-Irish body at Parliamentary level is concerned, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State have made clear that it will be up to the two Parliaments concerned to decide about this; and if such a body is set up, the Assembly itself will have to decide (in agreement with the two Parliaments) to what extent it wishes to participate".

I understand that the Northern Ireland Office will also be letting you have some comments. When you have been able to consider these, I suggest that you might let me have again the note for the record and the second draft letter to Mr Powell, with any revisions and any points you want to make in response to the Prime Minister's comments.

I am copying this minute to John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office).

F.R.B.

17 November 1982

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Robin Butler

MR ENOCH POWELL - NORTHERN IRELAND

1. I have now had an opportunity of considering carefully Sir Robert Armstrong's Minute dated 11th November 1982, addressed to you, which you submitted to the Prime Minister on the following date.
2. I have no comments to make on the shorter of the two draft letters which Sir Robert proposes to send to Mr Powell.
3. I have the following comments on the "Draft Note for the Record":-
 - (a) Page 3, Paragraph 1
 - (i) The meeting to which reference is made took place on 5th October 1979 (not 7th October 1979).
 - (ii) This meeting was attended by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the then ^{IRISH} ~~representative~~ Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Justice, the Chief Constable of the RUC, and the Commissioner of the Garda.
 - (iii) The final sentence of paragraph 5 (not 8) of the Communique is as follows:-

"The Irish Ministers emphasised the importance of an early initiative leading

(2)

to acceptable political institutions which both sections of the Community in Northern Ireland could support and sustain".

My own recollection is that Mr Powell did not purport to quote verbatim from the Communique, of which I attach a copy.

(b) Page 5

I agree that the word "component" should be added after the word "Ireland" in the 7th line of Paragraph 7.

4. I have the following comments on the longer of the two draft letters which Sir Robert proposes to send to Mr Powell:-

(a) Page 7, Paragraph 7

I note the words which the Prime Minister suggests should be deleted from this paragraph. Nevertheless, these words are crucial to the argument, and are central to the allegations made by Mr Powell. If these words should be deleted, their omission will certainly be noted by Mr Powell, and I would expect him to refer to the omission in his reply to Sir Robert's letter.

(b) Page 8

I certainly agree that the words suggested by the Prime Minister should be deleted.

(c) Page 9, Paragraph 9

(i) The sentence:-

"The proposal" (ie. for an Assembly in Northern Ireland) "was not made for the purpose of providing a Northern Ireland component for some Anglo-Irish inter-Parliamentary body." is dangerous and should be deleted.

(ii) Paragraph 8 of the Communique issued following the meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach agreed that it would be for the Parliaments concerned to consider at the appropriate time whether there should be an Anglo-Irish body at Parliamentary level comprising members to be drawn from the British and Irish Parliaments, the European Parliament, and any elected Assembly that may be established for Northern Ireland".

(iii) Paragraph 23 of the Secretary of State's White Paper presented to Parliament in April 1982 (Command 8541) contains the following sentence:-

"It is now for the Parliaments concerned to consider whether Governmental meetings of the Council should be complemented by an Anglo-Irish body at Parliamentary level in which members of the Parliaments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland could take part. The Government would expect the arrangements to enable members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to participate if they so wished."


(4)

(iv) More recently, Lord Gowrie has referred to the virtue of the Northern Ireland Act 1982, in that it will enable a Northern Ireland input into the proposed "Anglo-Irish body at Parliamentary level".

(d) I would expect the Secretary of State to suggest the deletion of this sentence. I suggest that if that sentence is deleted, the final sentence of that paragraph should read:-

"So far as any Anglo-Irish body at Parliamentary level is concerned, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State have made clear that it will be ~~put~~ to the two Parliaments concerned to decide about this; and if such a body is set up, the Assembly itself will have to decide (in agreement with the two Parliaments) to what extent it wishes to participate."

16.11.82


IAN GOW

Ireland
2A

Sir Robert Armstrong

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MR GEOFFREY SLOAN AND MR CLIVE ABBOTT

p612

1. My Secretary of State saw your minute of ~~14~~ 11 November just before his departure for the US and has considered it carefully on his return. He has also considered the Prime Minister's comments as recorded in Robin Butler's minute to you of ~~17~~ 17 November.

2. On the substantive draft letter to Mr Powell, Mr Prior agrees with the Prime Minister's preference for the deletion of the last complete sentence on page 8 ending with the words "relevant considerations". He also shares Mr Gow's view that the middle sentence in paragraph 9 is not quite right and agrees in the main with the proposed amendment, though he thinks that the latter part of it should be amended so that the revised passage reads:-

"So far as any Anglo-Irish body at Parliamentary level is concerned, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State have made clear that it will be up to the two Parliaments concerned to decide about this; and it will be a matter to be decided in agreement with the two Parliaments to what extent members of the Assembly should participate."

3. Mr Prior has also questioned whether paragraph 10 is necessary in the context of the reply to Mr Powell.

4. More importantly, he would be disturbed if, as suggested in Robin Butler's letter the latter part of paragraph 7 were omitted. Indeed he thinks that if this cannot be said there is little point in writing to Mr Powell. It is the gravamen of his charge that officials have entered into agreements with

officials of the Irish Government. To remain silent on this point will be taken either as confirmation of the charge or an indicating that Ministers do not know whether it is true or not. If there is any doubt in the minds of Ministers they would be open to criticism if they did not cause the most rigorous enquiries to be put in hand. Mr Prior, for his part, is wholly confident that the passage in paragraph 7 can and should stand. He also suggests that the disclaimer in the first part of paragraph 5 should be omitted so that it reads:-

"5. These are, of course, serious charges and I accept that, if well-founded, they would constitute a serious reflection on the professional integrity of the Civil Servants concerned and as such would be of much concern to me as the Joint Head of the Civil Service as well as to the Prime Minister and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland".

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to Robin Butler at No 10.

J. M. Lyon

J M LYON

Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

24 November 1982

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24 NOV 1982



10 DOWNING STREET

C.F.

I now await re-submission
of the papers from Sir Robert
Armstrong - pl. see penultimate
para. of my minute of 17
November.

Pl. will you ~~enquire of~~ ^{make sure that}
Sir R. Armstrong's office knows
that this is the next step.

PERB

25.11