

SECRET AND PERSONAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

Thank you for telegraphing the various documents emerging from your meeting with Mr Nally on 2/3 November to Delhi. The Prime Minister has considered them. I also passed copies to the Taoiseach.

Draft Communique

The Prime Minister is unable to accept points (i) and (iii) in the draft communique.

In her view, point (i) does not adequately reflect the emphasis of HMG's views on the future of Northern Ireland, but by putting the Irish aspiration first reads as though we are positively looking for ways to meet it. If this is the best that can be done by way of an attempt to express the views of the United Kingdom and Irish Governments in a single paragraph, she would prefer to see those views stated separately. The view of HMG that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, unless and until a majority of its inhabitants decide otherwise, which conclusion HMG would accept and implement, should be clearly stated. So too should the wish of the Irish Government that the two parts of Ireland should come together by freely negotiated agreement and in peace. The way matters are presented in your draft would, in the Prime Minister's view, cause resentment and unease among the Unionists which would

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greatly outweigh any benefit from the communique.

The problem with point (iii) is that the first sentence can clearly be interpreted as endorsing power-sharing, whatever it may be intended to mean. The Prime Minister does not wish to put her name to a Communique which appears to contain this implication.

To avoid any misunderstanding before or at the Summit, the Prime Minister would want you to let Mr Nally know straight away that these points are unacceptable to her and that amendments will be required. It is for consideration whether there should be further negotiation on them with the Irish before the Summit, or whether they should be reserved for the two Prime Minister's at the Summit itself.

Statement of Position

The Prime Minister has a number of additional comments on this.

She prefers the use of "United Kingdom Government" in place of "British Government" throughout.

She does not like the notion of informal consultation "on request" on matters where there is no formal right to consultation (paragraph 7).

She sees a risk that the phrase "acceptable system of devolved government" in paragraph 8 as giving a veto to both the Republic and to the Catholic minority.

She objects strongly to some of the ideas put forward by the Irish side, notably on the Ministerial Commission (paragraph 9), on the role of the Joint Security Commission (paragraph 12), and on practical policy measures (paragraph 14). These are of course unilateral Irish statements.

I am copying this minute to Graham Sandiford (Northern Ireland Office) and Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

Charles Powell

5 November 1984