

Prime Minister 33

As to my visit -
how did he know?
no

I would take
what Mr. Dorr said
with a large
pinch of salt!
CDP
16/xi

Ref. A084/3038

MR POWELL

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

The Irish Ambassador called in to see me this afternoon.

2. The main purpose of this visit was to explain that the Irish Speaking Note left with Mr Goodall by Mr Lillis on 12 November was not intended to represent a hardening of the Irish position or preparation for failure of the discussions at the Summit.

3. Mr Dorr said that I would recall that the Irish Government felt that at the last exchanges between Mr Nally and me the British Government's position appeared to have hardened, both in asserting that a measure of devolution acceptable to both sides in Northern Ireland was an integral part of the proposals without which the rest would fall and in asserting that the only possible basis for devolution was majority rule with safeguards. Some members of the Irish Government had felt that in the light of this apparent hardening of the British position it would be right to restate, in unambiguous terms, the Irish Government's objectives in the discussions. But, as Mr Lillis was at pains to make clear to Mr Goodall, the Irish Government was not to be regarded as committed by the Speaking Note, and the Speaking Note was not intended to to be some sort of Irish "bottom line".

4. I noted, and promised to pass on, what the Ambassador had said. I confirmed that both the substance and the tone of the Irish Speaking Note had affected the view which British Ministers took of the Irish Government's position in the discussion. The British Government might feel it necessary to put the record straight on certain matters in the Irish Speaking Note. I



suggested, that, though there need be no detailed discussion of the Speaking Note between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, the meeting between them would give each of them an opportunity to clarify their positions.

5. I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

RIA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

15 November 1984