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Prime Minister
Two interesting &
important discussions.

16 November 1984

The only conclusion which
one can reach from
DH's discussion with the Irish
Ambassador is that the
'equation' at present on offer
does not satisfy either side
and cannot \therefore be the basis of an
agreement

Dear Charles,

ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT

The Secretary of State suggests that, before the Summit, the
Prime Minister might like to see the attached note of a discussion
which Robert Andrew had with the Chief Constable of the RUC, and
the attached note of a discussion which the Secretary of State had
this morning with the Irish Ambassador.

CDP
16/ki

Copies of this letter and enclosures go to Len Appleyard (FCO) and
Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,

Graham Sandiford

G K SANDIFORD

Encls

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PS/Secretary of State

cc Mr Brennan
Mr Bourn (L)
Mr BurnsANGLO-IRISH INITIATIVE : VIEWS OF CHIEF CONSTABLE

1. The Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir John Hermon, called to see me at Stormont Castle on 12 November to give his considered reactions to the set of proposals which have emerged from the Armstrong/Nally talks which I had outlined to him in strict confidence on 7 November. Mr Bourn was also present. I suggested that the Chief Constable should deal first with the policing issues and secondly with the public order implications of the proposals as a whole.

2. Sir John said that in general the policing proposals canvassed by the British side did not present him with any difficulties. He would be totally opposed to the Irish proposal to break up the RUC, both because of the adverse effect this would have on effective policing and because of the political symbolism of the force in Unionist eyes. He dismissed as "crazy" the idea of putting Gardai on the streets of West Belfast; they would quickly be shot. High visibility changes of this sort would be bound to create opposition and it would be much better to move towards closer co-operation between the RUC and the Garda in more unobtrusive ways. He could go along with the British concept of a Joint Security Commission, provided that it did not affect operational control of the police. He was ready to increase efforts to recruit more Catholics into the RUC (which would be facilitated if the SDLP gave its support); and he would be prepared to deploy a higher proportion of Catholics in Catholic areas like West Belfast (though not in the streets where individual officers lived). He would welcome co-operation between the RUC and the Garda in fields such as training and the investigation

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of crime on a reciprocal basis, and a wider exchange of liaison officers. But what was most needed was a greater deployment of resources by the Garda in the border area, and a more determined effort to arrest known terrorists. At the moment the necessary will seemed to be lacking in Dublin. (Sir John added that he was considering writing a letter to the Commissioner about co-operation between the RUC and the Garda; we agreed that this should be held up until after the Summit).

3. Turning to the likely impact of the proposals as a whole, the Chief Constable said that he thought any agreement between the two governments on the lines proposed would be likely to lead to an intensification of terrorist activity by the PIRA. To deal with this would require a joint effort by the RUC and the Garda, which would depend on the necessary direction being given from Dublin. It might be desirable to introduce selective internment on both sides of the border in order to take out the leaders.

4. As far as the Unionist reaction was concerned Sir John thought that giving Dublin some institutionalised voice in the affairs of the North, even on a consultative basis, would only be acceptable if it were preceded by a change in climate brought about by a greater commitment by Dublin to security which was seen to be producing results. Otherwise he thought that Unionist leaders (and especially the DUP) would be bound to oppose the step, as they had opposed the Council of Ireland proposal which had brought down the Power-Sharing Executive in 1974. As a first step, he believed that both the Unionist parties would withdraw from any participation in the government of the North, forcing the British Government to continue direct rule. If the Government persisted in its policy he believed that street demonstrations would be organised by the DUP. It should be possible for the RUC to deal with these, although resources would be stretched if they were having to deal at the same time with a higher level of PIRA activity and there might be a need for more troops. If very large numbers of Unionists took to the streets it would be difficult to maintain order and there would be a risk of serious violence. Moreover there was a danger that the Unionists

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would resort to industrial action as they had done in 1974. There was no way in which essential services could be kept going in the face of a mass withdrawal of labour. The Chief Constable added that if an Irish representative were established in Belfast his office would be bound to become a focus for disorder and violence.

5. Sir John Hermon emphasised that political judgements on these matters must be a matter for Ministers and not the police. If decisions were taken which provoked a Unionist reaction the RUC would do all in its power to maintain order. But the proposals which I had outlined to him carried serious risks. His strong advice was that we should not commit ourselves to institutionalised consultation on political matters, at least until we had sought to build up a climate of confidence among the Unionists by developing a dialogue with Dublin on security matters.

14 November 1984


R J ANDREW**PERSONAL SECRET**