

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
WHITEHALL  
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Charles Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

9 September 1985

*Dear Charles,*

EQUITY

Thank you for your letter to Jim Daniell of 3 September.  
This is to confirm that Mr King endorses the views previously  
expressed by Mr Hurd.

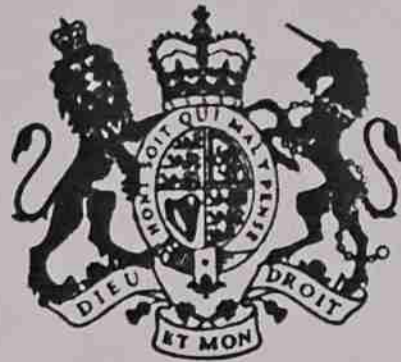
*Yours sincerely,*

*Jonathan Duke-Evans*

J B Duke-Evans

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

3 September 1985

**EQUITY**

The Prime Minister has considered the advice in Mr. Hurd's minute of 2 September that it would be better for her to visit Northern Ireland soon after rather than just before an Agreement was signed. Subject to the views of Mr. King, the Prime Minister is inclined to accept this advice.

I am reserving an alternative slot in the Prime Minister's diary for such a visit but, for security reasons, will not commit the dates to paper.

(C. D. POWELL)

Jim Daniell, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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PRIME MINISTER

Agree, subject to  
Mr. King's views? *Yes*  
EQUITY *CDP 2/9*

Prime Minister  
Personally I am sure that  
Mr. Hurd is right to suggest  
that you should make your  
visit to Northern Ireland after  
rather than before an agreement. We  
might use the details of the Italian  
bilateral, which I am postponing.

We have discussed briefly on several occasions the possibility of your visiting Northern Ireland later this year. My Permanent Secretary wrote to your Private Secretary on 5 July with details of a possible programme for a visit which it was then envisaged might take place in late September, although it was recognised that both timing and contents would have to be reviewed in the light of progress of the Anglo-Irish negotiations.

I have been reflecting on this in the context of the possibility that we may now conclude an Anglo-Irish Agreement at the end of October. As you know, I very much hope that you will be able to come to Northern Ireland in the near future, and I think that the possibility of an Anglo-Irish Agreement strengthens the case for doing so. On balance I think it would be best if you were to come soon after rather than just before an Agreement was signed. If the visit took place before the Agreement had been signed you would be bound to be asked questions about it. You would be inhibited from saying very much; but it would be difficult to ignore the subject, and there would be a risk that anything you did say would be taken amiss by the Irish Government or by the Unionists. If you were to come soon after the Agreement had been signed, I think it would demonstrate that the new arrangements had your full support and at the same time would help to reassure the Unionists that they were not being abandoned.

I recognise, of course, the pressures on your programme in the Autumn. It may simply be impossible to fit in a visit to

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Northern Ireland in November. In that case I would hope that we could retain the existing slot, though we should need to look carefully at the draft programme to see whether any adjustments should be made. If it were at all possible for you to come later, however, I think that it would maximise the benefits of the visit.

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*Jonathan Duke-Evans*

2 September 1985

D.H.

Approved by the  
Secretary of State  
and signed in his  
absence

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