

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
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Charles Powell Esq
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Dear Charles,

I understand that at Cabinet it was agreed that the Prime Minister should be provided with a form of words on the indications given by Mr Hurd, during his term of office here, of the likely Irish ... role in Northern Ireland under the agreement. I attach the material as requested.

Yours sincerely
Neil Ward.

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Q: Should the Government not have made the Unionists aware during the negotiations that the Irish Government would be given a formal role in Northern Ireland's affairs?

A: The Government could not have made known the details of the negotiations. They could not have been successful if they were conducted in public. But Ministers made clear the basis of the negotiations while they were going on. Firstly that there could be no change in Northern Ireland's status without majority consent. And secondly that the Republic might have a more formal means to express its views to us on developments in Northern Ireland.

[If pressed: The Government did not brief the representatives of either community on the negotiations on the Agreement].

(Annex A includes examples of occasions when Mr Hurd [redacted] made clear what role the Republic might have).

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STATEMENTS BEFORE THE SUMMIT ON THE ROLE OF THE REPUBLIC IN THE
EVENT OF AN AGREEMENT

- a) Mr Hurd 21 November 1984
News Conference

"... I personally see no objection if the Irish Republic from time to time wish to warn or advise about particular aspects of our policy. I think we should take that and discuss calmly with them the consequences and then take our own decisions ..."

"... there are quite a number of things which the Irish Government raise with us and some of them are matters which Governments of bordering countries would raise anyway because they affect it in one way or another. Others are matters in which the Irish Government has an interest because of its links with the Nationalist community here. What I'm saying is that both Jim Prior and I are ready to listen and respond to the kind of points which are raised.

- b) Mr Hurd 4 December 1984
Northern Ireland Assembly

"When Irish Ministers have views to express on events and policies in Northern Ireland, then we should be ready to listen carefully to those views and take them fully into account. Their interest and their concern for the Nationalist minority are natural and can be respected."

- c) Mr Hurd 20 January 1985
Interview on RTE Radio

"I see the Irish Government free to articulate the views which I hope will be expressed in the interests of the whole of NI, not just on behalf of part of it, and I see that it will always be

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sensible for the people running the Province here to listen carefully to those views. Now that happens to some extent now rather sporadically. We've discussed some of the ways in which it happens. If that could be made rather more methodical then I think those views might carry greater weight and I think this is an area where serious work needs to be done within the constraints which have emerged from recent discussions ... There could be machinery for that but exactly what it is and what you call it and how it works and what its limits are, that is where I think the work needs to be done."

- d) Mr Hurd 24 January 1985
Speech to European Atlantic Group

"For their part the constitutional representatives of the Nationalist community would be reassured if there were some greater recognition of the interest of the Irish Government in the affairs of the Province. I believe there is serious work to be done here. I hope this work can lead to a successful agreement."

- e) Mr Hurd 6 March 1985
Speech to Parliamentary Press Gallery

"The Government has recognised the position of the Republic in relations to Northern Ireland. There is a great deal of merit in devising arrangements through which we can take full account of the Republic's views and co-operate on matters of mutual concern".