

CONFIDENTIAL
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

3 March 1986

CDP
5/3

Dear Charles,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR JAMES KILFEDDER

I attach a brief for the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr Kilfedder on 5 March. Clearly it may need to be revised in the light of the strike today and any subsequent developments.

The meeting with Mr Kilfedder may take on a more than usual importance. Mr Kilfedder has the ear of most Unionist politicians and might be asked to relay a message from the Government to ... Mr Molyneaux and Dr Paisley. The attached brief proposes that we might ask him to try to persuade them to resume the dialogue with the Government, which they abandoned when they returned to Belfast on 25 February. While such a meeting is unlikely to succeed at present, it is important that the Government continue to show itself ready to resume the dialogue.

I am copying this letter to Len Appleyard and Michael Stark.

*Yours sincerely
Neil Ward*

N D WARD

CONFIDENTIAL

KL

CONFIDENTIAL

E.

BRIEF FOR PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR KILFEDDER

Objections

- a) To put the Government's view of the Anglo-Irish Agreement
- b) To put to Mr Kilfedder the same points which were put to Mr Molyneaux and Dr Paisley on 25 February; and to persuade him to accept them.
- c) To put to him the dangers of the confrontation on which the Unionists seem bent
- d) To persuade him to use his influence to get Mr Molyneaux and Dr Paisley to resume their dialogue with the Government
- e) To explain the Government's policy towards the Assembly.

Background

Mr Kilfedder is the leader of the Ulster Popular Unionist Party. The Party, which broke off from the UUP in 1979, is restricted to the North Down constituency where Mr Kilfedder has been MP for 16 years. He is also Speaker of the Assembly, a position which he gained because he was an acceptable candidate to both the UUP and DUP. He did not come with the other two Unionist leaders to meet the Prime Minister, perhaps because of his junior status in Northern Ireland politics. While he may decide to call the meeting off in solidarity with the other Unionists, equally he may be attracted by a meeting with the Prime Minister.

Mr Kilfedder is something of a maverick. He is a more liberal Unionist than most, but still very much opposed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement; He is at present the only Unionist politician who is still prepared to meet the Government. Any messages which we wish to put to the other Unionists as a whole might be put through Mr Kilfedder (although it will be important not to give Mr Kilfedder the impression that his party is less important than the others). We will by the time of the meeting know the extent of the strike on 3 March.

CONFIDENTIAL

/...

Mr Kilfedder is likely to be at least as concerned about the future of the NI Assembly, as with the Anglo-Irish Agreement. At present, it is not discharging its scrutiny functions under the Northern Ireland Act 1982. Instead, it is being used as a platform for unionist protests against the Agreement. Ministers, industrialists and civil servants have been ~~vitriolic~~^{villified}. The Assembly Committees have sought to enquire into the impact of the Agreement on the Northern Ireland Departments by summoning Departmental officials to appear before them. The Secretary of State has declined to allow them to do so and has instead offered to meet Committee Chairmen himself. The offer has been rejected. He has also made clear that the position of civil servants seconded to the Committees, who at present have very little work to do, is under review. (The letter making these points was (because it replied to correspondence sent by Committee Clerks to Departmental Permanent Secretaries) directed to the Clerk of the Assembly rather than to the Speaker and Mr Kilfedder is known to regard this as a personal slight. The Secretary of State has since written to him setting out the full background.)

Arguments

- a) The Government is committed to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Endorsed at Westminster by massive majorities. At the same time we recognise the significance of the Unionist vote in the by-elections.

The Agreement reinforces the status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom and right of majority to determine that status, as well as the sovereign responsibility of HMG in Northern Ireland. The Government wants Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom.

Determined that Agreement shall bring benefits for everyone in Northern Ireland including unionists. Not doing badly so far. Arms finds in Sligo and Roscommon on 26 January were biggest

ever on land in Ireland. We are working hard for more successes like that. Irish Republic has signed European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, something Unionists have long wanted.

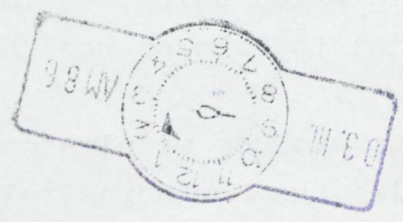
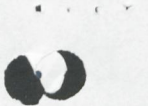
- b) The Government recognises the wish of Unionists to be consulted fully about the affairs of Northern Ireland in parallel with what goes on in the Intergovernmental Conference. We would like to establish arrangements for consultation - not necessarily confined to matters discussed in the Intergovernmental Conference. We are also ready to consult you and other leaders about the future of the NI Assembly and the arrangements for handling Northern Ireland business at Westminster.

We are willing to consider positively the suggestion of a Round Table Conference on devolution. We are ready to consider any types of devolution that command widespread acceptance in Northern Ireland. We could look at various possibilities including a scheme within the 1982 Act; the DUP's idea of the devolution of legislative powers; the UUP's ideas for executive or administrative devolution; or Sir Frederick Catherwood's idea of weighted majorities to protect minority interests. If devolution were to take place it would reduce the scope of the Intergovernmental Conference considerably.

- c) The strike on Monday can only have harmed NI's interests. The Province will be seen as industrially unstable. The strike has encouraged the more violent elements to come to the fore. It puts at risk the future of all the people of Northern Ireland. Now that opposition to the Agreement has been registered, it is in everyone's interest that dialogue resumes.
- d) At the meeting on 25 February it was agreed that I would talk further with Mr Molyneaux and Dr Paisley. They subsequently changed their minds. The Government would like to resume that dialogue. You are well placed as Speaker to encourage both the

UUP and DUP to resume it. I also hope it can be continued with you and with Mr Cushnahan.

- e) Appreciate the steadying role which Mr Kilfedder has played in his capacity as Speaker.
- f) The Government genuinely wishes to see the Assembly continue. It is an important forum in which unionists can make their views known. It has the potential to take on real power.
- g) The Assembly was elected to produce widely-acceptable devolution proposals, and to scrutinise the Northern Ireland Departments. Instead, the First Report of its Grand Committee, declared that no devolution proposals will be forthcoming while the Agreement continues. The Assembly has also stopped its scrutiny work. Some of the anti-Agreement rhetoric seen recently is highly irresponsible. All this must put a question mark over its future.



CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL