

Prime Minister
CDP 12/3.

Ref. A086/792

PRIME MINISTER

I shall be reporting separately on the main part of my conversation with Mr Nally today.

2. I had some time with him tête-à-tête before other people joined us, in the course of which he made four points:

1. Mr James Molyneaux is seeking to contact the Taoiseach. Mr Nally had no idea what Mr Molyneaux wanted to talk to the Taoiseach about. I said that, following the rebuff from his followers after his meeting with you, we were not sure how strong Mr Molyneaux's position was or what his intentions were. He might wish to sound out the Taoiseach about the possibility of the Irish Government being willing to agree to some kind of suspension of the Anglo-Irish Agreement or the Intergovernmental Conference. I reminded Mr Nally that you had said to Mr Molyneaux that there was no question of suspending, modifying or departing from the Agreement; you had said that you could say no more than that we should be prepared to operate the Agreement sensitively, and I suggested that the Taoiseach might take the same sort of line.

2. Mr Paisley is due to talk privately to Mr Hume in Strasbourg tomorrow (11 March). This meeting was at Mr Paisley's request, and it was not known what Mr Paisley wanted. It is apparently not unusual for them to meet privately in Strasbourg.

3. The Taoiseach wanted you to know that, if at some point it would be convenient that there should be a slightly longer than usual interval between the meetings of

the Intergovernmental Conference - in order (for instance) to enable a round table conference on devolution to get started - he would understand and accept that; indeed, if it would help, he would be prepared to suggest it. It would be important that the Secretariat should continue to work, and that meetings between other Ministers than Mr Barry and Mr King (for instance the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice) and the work of the various special groups that had been set up should continue.

4. Mr Nally referred to the suggestion that we had asked the White House to give the Taoiseach's visit "a low profile". I said, with some emphasis, that that was absolutely without foundation, and there had been no contact with the White House on Irish matters, to this effect or any other. I suggested that this might perhaps be a misunderstanding (possibly mischievously motivated) of attempts which (as the Irish Government knew) we had made to ensure that any public announcement by the United States Administration of their proposed contribution to a Fund took full account of unionist sensitivity.

3. I have not sent copies of this minute to anyone else.

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ROBERT ARMSTRONG

10 March 1986



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