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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your further minute of 13 May.

The Prime Minister does not think that "every possible effort" is sufficiently different from "every effort" to be worth the trouble. She much prefers "determined efforts".

But provided you could obtain the Irish side's acceptance of the new last sentence proposed in paragraph 5 of your minute, I think you could in the last resort fall back to "every effort" if all your attempts to persuade the Irish to accept "determined efforts" fail.

Taken with my minute of 13 May, I think that this gives you a range of negotiating options within which you should be able to reach a satisfactory agreement with the Irish.

I am copying this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Northern Ireland Secretary and the Foreign Secretary.

C.D. POWELL

13 May 1985



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 May 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has considered your minute of 7 May reporting on the latest round of discussions with Irish officials on Northern Ireland. She agrees that a number of the points raised there will need to be considered further in OD(I).

On the immediate point about the revision of paragraph 2 of the British text about a new Standing Committee, the Prime Minister is not satisfied with the revised version proposed in your minute. While recognising that presentation is important vis a vis the Republic, she thinks that the Unionists' reaction is no less important. With this in mind, she would wish to see two changes to your text:

(a) She does not like the phrase "every effort would be made ..." to resolve differences because this could mean acceding to the Republic's wishes against our own better judgment. She would be prepared to accept "strenuous" or "vigorous" efforts or any similar word.

(b) She considers it more important to retain in the text "the British Government would retain full responsibility for decisions" than "there would be no derogation of sovereignty". The whole agreement is based on the presumption that sovereignty cannot be affected. She would wish you to propose to the Irish Government, therefore, a text which reads:

"strenuous/vigorous efforts would be made through the standing committee to resolve any differences. But the British Government would retain full responsibility for decisions. The focus of ..."

Although the Prime Minister hopes that you can negotiate point (b) above successfully, I think that in the last resort she would be ready to drop it. Her position on (a) above is very firm.

I am copying this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Northern Ireland Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

mg