

CONFIDENTIAL

*File to
C: Houlton*



cc. PC.

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

16 January 1990

NORTHERN IRELAND: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Prime Minister has considered the Northern Ireland Secretary's further minute of 15 January suggesting how he might follow up his speech in Bangor on 9 January. She is content insofar as action within Northern Ireland is proposed, but does not think it necessary to involve the Irish Government so extensively at this stage. Irish support for devolution is in the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and that is sufficient for now. We should get on first with bilaterals with the parties in Northern Ireland, to see whether the basis for wider talks exists, and only in the light of these engage in more extensive consultations with the Irish Government. This would not rule out briefing the Irish in general terms at the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference about our intentions. But I think the Prime Minister would regard the proposed talks between senior officials later this week as premature.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Lord President, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Attorney General and Sir Robin Butler.

C.D. POWELL

Stephen Leach, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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