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Prime Minister

This generally follows what the Northern Ireland

Secretary said to you. But it envisages the review applying only to the functioning of the Committee, not to the Agreement as a whole.

PRIME MINISTER

ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS : NORTHERN IRELAND

I have been reflecting on Sir Robert Armstrong's submission to you of 3 June enclosing the revised text of the British proposal following our meeting in OD(I) on 23 May. I appreciate the arguments which he puts forward - and which the Foreign Secretary has since endorsed - for not providing explicitly for the suspension or termination of the Standing Intergovernmental Committee's activities as agreed by OD(I). Nevertheless, I believe that we should go further than paragraph 4 of the latest text.

I doubt that is realistic. Agree to support his views, while pointing out that we may have to accept review of the agreement as a whole? COD 7/6 Yes

The proposed agreement would, I think, be unique in relations between sovereign states and we cannot tell in advance how it would work out in practice. As I see it we are ready to reach an agreement and to concede to the Irish a consultative role because we have two crucial objectives of our own which an agreement should help us to attain, namely better security co-operation and an unfreezing of nationalist attitudes in Northern Ireland towards its institutions. I rate both these objectives as more important than the declaration in Part II of the draft agreement. Neither of these objectives can be fully defined in the text of the agreement. But we must try to avoid finding ourselves in a few years time in a situation in which the agreement had not achieved our objectives - but we were locked into a committee structure of regular Ministerial meetings over a defined range of topics which had become a source of friction. (The draft agreement would commit us to "frequent" Ministerial meetings and to special meetings to be convened at the request of either side.) In such circumstances

**SECRET PERSONAL**

there might be no alternative to the unilateral denunciation of the agreement, including Section II; but we would be reluctant to do this and it is possible to envisage a situation falling short of total breakdown in which we might want to make fairly drastic changes and possibly to suspend the working of the Committee altogether. It seems to me that we should be in a stronger position to do this if we had written into the agreement a specific review clause, calling for a formal review of the Committee's work after a certain period, rather than merely leaving it open to the two Governments to propose changes if they so wished.

The sort of review clause I have in mind would be on the following lines:

"At the end of 3 years from the signature of this agreement, or earlier if requested by either party, the working of the Committee would be reviewed by the two Governments to see whether any changes in the scope and nature of its activities were desirable."

This might best appear as a separate paragraph at the end of Section III under a sub-heading of "Arrangements for Review", replacing paragraph 4 of Sir Robert Armstrong's draft. I would have thought that we might have been able to sell such a review clause to the Irish as a neutral provision without arousing undue suspicion. After all, they could use the clause to press for an extension of the scope and nature of the Committee's work, and we should have to be prepared for that.

If this proposal commends itself to you and our colleagues I suggest that it should be incorporated in the text to be given to the Irish.

I am copying this minute to the other members of OD(I) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

D.H.

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