

SECRET AND PERSONAL

file SS

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

27 June 1985

ANGLO-IRISH TALKS: POLICE AUTHORITY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has considered the Foreign Secretary's minute of 26 June about the Taoiseach's suggestion that an announcement should be made at the time of signature of the proposed Anglo-Irish agreement to the effect that steps would be taken to reconstitute the police authority for Northern Ireland in consultation with the Irish Government.

The Prime Minister disagrees with the Foreign Secretary. She believes that any announcement on this matter at the time of signature of an agreement would have a very bad effect on the Unionists. She does not think that we could do more than confirm in answers to questions that appointments to the police authority were one area in which the Irish Government could express a view.

I am copying this letter to Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office).

C D POWELL

Len Appleyard, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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Prime Minister 43



disagree with the F.C.S. This would have a very bad effect on the Unionists

You will want to be aware that Dr. Fitzgerald will raise this in Dáil.

I cannot see that we could possibly make the sort of announcement which Dr. Fitzgerald wants.

The most we could do would be to confirm in answer to questions that appointments to the Police Authority were one area in which the Republic could express a view.

PM/85/61

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Talks: Police Authority for Northern Ireland

COP 26/6

1. We discussed Dr FitzGerald's concerns about the reappointment of the Police Authority for Northern Ireland at your meeting on 20 June. Our reply, as you have no doubt seen from Dublin telex 400 and 401, has not been sufficient to meet his anxieties. But he has suggested that his difficulties would be eased if we were prepared to make an announcement at the time of the signature of the proposed agreement that steps would be taken to reconstitute it in consultation with the Irish Government and if he could tell John Hume that this would be done.

2. I am bound to say that I believe that his request covers a serious point. The substance of the proposed agreement will oblige us to take any Irish proposal about the powers, scope and composition of the Authority seriously. Nevertheless, unless we draw attention to this aspect of the agreement, nationalist opinion is likely to conclude that on the contrary we have cynically made sure that on an important subject covered by the agreement there will be no chance for the consultation process to take effect in the first three years of its operation. I do not see how that can help the selling of the agreement to nationalist opinion in either part of Ireland. On the other side we shall probably be criticised by Unionist opinion in any case.

3. Secondly, as you know, we are under pressure from the Irish Government to make announcements about "associated measures"



which would come into effect at the same time as signature of the agreement. For good domestic political reasons we would prefer to avoid such announcements, but introduce the necessary measures gradually and without much fanfare. Provided it was carefully worded, an announcement going some way to meet Dr FitzGerald's concern (eg making clear what would already have been agreed that the Irish would be able, under the agreement, to make proposals in this area which we would consider very carefully) would not make our position significantly worse with the Unionists, but would defuse a serious bone of contention with the Irish Government. It would simultaneously provide us with a concession, which might enable us to resist greater concessions on the related point of associated measures in general.

4. Dr Fitzgerald is likely to raise both these areas of difficulty with you in Milan. A quick, favourable response on the Police Authority would not harm our interests in substance, and would strengthen your hand in other areas of the negotiations. I think however that it would be a bad idea for Dr Fitzgerald to tell John Hume at this stage.

5. I have sent a copy of this minute to Douglas Hurd.

