

MEETING OF OD(I)

The text of a possible agreement with the Irish Government appears to be close to agreement with the very important exception of joint courts. You commented over the weekend: "We cannot agree to this". I don't think you will find much disposition in OD(I) to oppose this, though the position is undoubtedly a bit different since Lord Lowry's letter disclaiming root and branch opposition to the concept.

The focus has now shifted to the idea of rapid implementation of the agreement as an alternative to associated measures. You will want to be sure that the Northern Ireland Secretary does not think we are moving ahead too fast on this.

Other points on which you will want to focus are the timing of an agreement. But I really think you must avoid committing yourself on a date until you can assess the situation at the beginning of September. Dates - including some genuine ones - are already being bandied about in the Irish Press. On location, your idea of the Irish Embassy in London looks a strong runner. On presentation, I would be a bit cautious about the Foreign Secretary holding a meeting with Shultz and Barry in Helsinki in mid-July. This is too long before the likely conclusion of an agreement, and bound to leak.

You will remember that the Northern Ireland Secretary has some reservations about the idea of a fund financed mainly by the Americans. He fears that the Unionists will see it as traitors' gold.

CDP

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15 July, 1985.