



file 216
L03AHI

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has considered your minute of 16 July recording the outcome of your meetings on 15/16 July with Mr. Nally. She notes that you will be having a further meeting next week.

The Prime Minister objects most strongly to the addition to the last sub-paragraph of the preamble of the draft Agreement which has now been proposed by the Irish side. She regards it as derogatory of and provocative to the Unionists and has described it as "totally unacceptable".

The Prime Minister prefers "Standing Inter-Governmental Committee" to "Inter-Governmental Commission". But she would be guided by the views of the Northern Ireland Secretary on whether the latter is acceptable.

The Prime Minister does not like the suggestion that the Agreement might be signed at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, nor is she enthusiastic about the suggestion of Corrymeela. She would prefer our proposal for signing twice, once in London and once in Dublin.

The Prime Minister considers it essential that the Secretariat of the Standing Inter-Governmental Committee should be small as we have proposed. She hopes that you will adopt a firm line with the Irish side on this.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and Mr. Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

CHARLES POWELL

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'CP' or similar initials.

18 July 1985

PRIME MINISTER

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

On Sir Robert Armstrong's minute attached, he will need guidance on:

No - totally unacceptable

(i) Do you agree the addition to the preamble proposed in 2(a) of his minute? It might justifiably be seen by the Unionists as derogatory.

I prefer our title - but would be prepared to concede on this - subject to view of N.I. authorities

(ii) Would you accept "Intergovernmental Commission" in place of "Standing Intergovernmental Committee"? "Commission" implies to me some direct responsibility in the North than we are giving the Irish Government.

(iii) I assume that you would not agree to signature at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham (please see paragraph 9). Do you have any reaction to the centre for reconciliation at Corrymeela on the Northern Ireland coast (if the security assessment is favourable)? *would prefer Dublin/London*

(iv) Agree to insist on a small secretariat for the Standing Committee?

Yes no

C D P

C D POWELL
17 July 1985

Prime Minister 16.

Ref. A085/1920

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

Mr Nally and I met on the evening of Monday 15 July and through Tuesday 16 July to continue our discussion of the draft Anglo-Irish Agreement and the matters connected therewith. Each of us was accompanied by the usual supporting team.

Draft Agreement

2. There are only two changes to report in the text which was circulated with OD(I)(85) 4:

a. The Irish would like to expand the last sub-paragraph of the preamble so as to read (new words underlined):

"Reaffirming their commitment to a society in Northern Ireland (in which neither tradition dominates the other and) in which all may live in peace, free from discrimination and intolerance and with the opportunity for both communities to participate in the structures and processes of government".

b. The Irish are still unhappy with the title "Standing Intergovernmental Committee": apparently "Standing" does not have the same meaning in Irish as it has in English, and "Committee" is thought to have a depressing flavour. They have suggested that the title of the new body should be "the Intergovernmental Commission".

[This will be provocative to the Unionists]

[Such a Commission suggests a much greater degree of joint responsibility than is properly the case].

"Rapid Implementation"

3. The Irish are content to proceed as we propose, with a passage in the communiqué accompanying the Agreement which looks forward to an early meeting of the new body (whatever it is to be called) and sets out an agenda for that meeting. They believe that, if the Taoiseach is to be able to sell the proposition to the SDLP and to the Dail, the communiqué will need to go into rather more detail about the matters to be discussed at the first meeting; and they will privately want to know as much as we can tell them in advance about the progress that can be made at that first meeting. They are in general content with the approach represented in the draft passage for a communiqué attached as Annex B to OD(I)(85) 4, but are asking for it to go into much more detail and to mention one or two matters outside the security and legal fields. They will agree to include in the communiqué suitable references to their readiness to return the Garda task force to the border and to sign the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism.

4. On all this my impression was that in the end we should be able to reach agreement with them on wording which would be within what we are prepared to discuss.

5. On joint courts, they were still saying that the Irish Government needed a prior commitment to the establishment of joint courts. I made it absolutely clear that the British Government could enter into no such commitment. This was not just a matter of the objections of the Northern Ireland judiciary, who had (as they knew) made it clear that they would do what Parliament directed them to do. There were serious practical and political difficulties, through which we were not yet able to see our way. We were ready to undertake to consider the possibility of joint courts, but no more. As part of that process we should be ready to consider other measures, such as conferences of judges from North and South to consider alignment

of law and legal practice, for instance in the field of sentencing for terrorist offences. On this subject I formed the impression that they were under instructions from the Taoiseach; but that, if the rest of the package was acceptable, this might not in the end be a stumbling block to reaching an agreement.

Fund

6. We had some further discussion of the proposal for a fund for reconstruction and development, to which the United States Government would make a contribution. We dealt with this on the lines agreed at OD(I). There was a considerable measure of agreement with the Irish on our way of thinking about it, though the Taoiseach is likely to attach more importance than we do to expressions of support and contributions of money from European Governments and the European Community.

Timing

7. We did not discuss definite dates, but were in agreement in thinking in terms of the second half of September. I said that I thought that the Government would be unlikely to propose the recall of Parliament to debate the Agreement, and to think in terms of a Parliamentary debate in the last two weeks of October. It might, however, be that the Official Unionists would press for the recall of Parliament to debate the Agreement; if they did, there might be advantage in conceding an early recall, if that would help to focus Unionist reaction to the Agreement in Parliamentary channels.

8. Mr Nally said that the Dail was not due to resume after the Summer Recess until 23 October. The Irish Government thought that, if an agreement was reached in the latter half of September, the very early recall of the Dail to debate the

Agreement would be politically and perhaps legally necessary.
Such a debate would take place before the first meeting of the new intergovernmental body.

Venue for Signature

9. Mr Nally said that the Taoiseach was likely to propose that an Agreement might be signed at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham (on the outskirts of Dublin), which is apparently an offshoot of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The signature would thus take place in Dublin, but in a building with long British associations and beneath portraits of King William III and Queen Mary II. Mr Nally thought that it would be difficult for the Taoiseach to sign the Agreement in the United Kingdom, given that the last three meetings with you had all taken place this side of the water. I said that I thought that it would be difficult for you to come to Dublin to sign the Agreement: that would convey the wrong signals to the Unionists in Northern Ireland. Mr Nally did not exclude the possibility of signing twice, once in England and once in Ireland, though he saw the practical difficulties associated with that. He was not enthusiastic about the idea of signing in the Irish Embassy in London. He said that the Taoiseach would be ready to go to Northern Ireland for the purpose of signing the Agreement. One possibility was Hillsborough; but that could present major security problems. Another suggestion was Corrymeela, on the north coast of Northern Ireland. Corrymeela is the site of a centre for reconciliation, and it seemed to me that it was well worth considering the suggestion seriously. I have asked the Northern Ireland Office to look into the practical and security implications.

Secretariat of Standing Intergovernmental Committee

10. We had some discussion of the role and composition of the Joint Secretariat of the Standing Intergovernmental Committee. Mr Robert Andrew outlined the Northern Ireland Office's ideas for

a very small British team of two or three people led by an Assistant Secretary, who would provide the secretarial services and act as a channel of communication with the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Departments on matters of substance. It was evident that the Irish were thinking in terms of a somewhat larger and higher-powered Irish team: in particular, they would want the head of the Irish side of the Secretariat to be an official who had the confidence and right of access to Irish Ministers. They thought that the Minister for Foreign Affairs would be the Irish Chairman of the Committee.

Next Steps

11. We are to have another meeting with the Irish team next week, to progress these various matters further and in particular to exchange ideas about the additional detail for inclusion in the communiqué on "rapid implementation". I will report again to you after that meeting, in time for you to make a further progress report to the Cabinet on Thursday 25 July. We may need one more meeting with the Irish before the summer break, to continue discussion of these matters and to firm up the preparations for presenting the Agreement in advance to the United States Government and Congressional leaders and to other Governments whose support will be valuable and can be counted upon, such as the Governments of the European Community countries and the Governments of Canada and Australia.

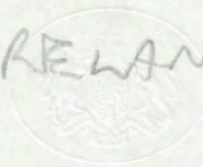
12. I am sending copies of this minute to the Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and for Northern Ireland.



ROBERT ARMSTRONG

16 July 1985

Relations: IRELAND Pt 9.



CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY