

SECRET AND PERSONAL



SPW
21

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Sir Robert Armstrong

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has noted your minute of 24 July about your further round of talks with Mr. Nally without comment.

I am copying this minute to the Private Secretaries of the Northern Ireland Secretary and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

(C. D. POWELL)

25 July 1985

SECRET AND PERSONAL

JB

CDP

Prime Minister 19

CDP

24/7.

Ref. A085/1974

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

I had a round of talks with Mr Nally and his team on 21-22 July. There will be a further session on 30-31 July, after which I shall report fully on the stage reached before the summer break. But you may wish to know immediately the main points about this week's meeting, particularly since the subject is on the agenda for Cabinet on 25 July.

2. The Irish continue to express a strong preference for not calling the new body a "Committee". They say that this word has the wrong overtones in Ireland, being applied most frequently to parish committees in the countryside which are ineffectual and a traditional laughing stock. I deployed the arguments against "Commission" but agreed to take it back for further consideration. I hope that we may now be authorised to settle for the title "Intergovernmental Commission".

3. There was another exchange about joint courts, with both sides sticking to their guns. When it was over, Mr Nally remarked that there were very few judges from the minority community on the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland. We thought that he was hinting that a move to increase the number of such judges on that Court would help the Irish side to swallow our refusal to give an advance commitment to establish joint courts. Officials are looking into the point.

4. The Irish pressed us for undertakings about the steps we would take in rapid implementation of the agreement, especially regarding the security forces. We said that we thought that the communiqué issued at the time of the signature of the agreement

[You were ready to agree if DH was content]

could (on lines already agreed) define the areas for discussion at the first meeting of the new body and indicate the objectives which would inform the discussion, but should not be specific about measures to be considered, in order to minimise speculation, false hopes or excessive fears. I shall submit shortly for approval a revised draft of the proposed communiqué passage, as a basis for discussion with the Irish side next week.

5. As to specific measures to be discussed at the first meeting of the new body, we have (with the agreement of the Northern Ireland Office and the Ministry of Defence) told the Irish side that we should in principle be willing to introduce a new Code of Conduct for the Royal Ulster Constabulary, which would enshrine the principle of even-handedness between the two communities; and that we could take some steps concerning the Ulster Defence Regiment, notably an increase in the training undergone by part-timers on recruitment and the seconding of more non-commissioned officers from the regular army to the Ulster Defence Regiment. I do not need further instructions at present, but we may not have heard the last of Irish pressure for "additional measures".

6. In discussion about where to hold the summit meeting to sign the agreement, the Irish were not enthusiastic about the idea of a double meeting, partly in London and partly in Dublin. They said that, if they were to consider it, such a meeting would have to begin in London and conclude in Dublin; and that the press conference, which Mr Nally and I both thought should on this occasion be a joint one by you and the Taoiseach, should take place in Dublin. Mr Nally argued that the last four Anglo-Irish Summits had taken place in Great Britain and that Dr FitzGerald would be greatly criticised if the meeting or the more public part of a two-part meeting, were to take place here.



7. The Irish continued to press for a location in Northern Ireland. The former Palace of the Anglican Archbishop at Armagh was mentioned. The attraction of this, in symbolic terms, is that Armagh is traditionally an "all-Ireland" site. We are looking into the practical and security implications.

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

RTA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

24 July 1985