



FILE

Ref
56

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ANGLO/IRISH RELATIONS:NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your further minute of 24 September about the possible draft message to Mr. McFarlane on the question of United States support for an Anglo-Irish agreement and a United States contribution to a fund for economic and social development in Northern Ireland.

I have again consulted the Prime Minister. She recalls that in earlier discussions of this fund in OD(I) (or possibly at a smaller Ministerial meeting) great stress was laid on the importance of not appearing to link the agreement over Northern Ireland directly with a United State's financial contribution, because of the risk of seeming to "sell out" the North. For this reason she would prefer to avoid any messages which create such a link and to raise the matter orally with Mr. McFarlane on 28 September. She therefore confirms her earlier decision that you should not send him a message.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office).

edd

TJ

(C.D. Powell)
24 September, 1985

Ref. A085/2431

MR POWELL

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

Thank you for your minute of 23 September about the possible draft message to Mr McFarlane on the question of United States support for an Anglo-Irish agreement and a United States contribution to a fund for economic and social development in Northern Ireland.

2. There is a slight problem about waiting until the weekend before making a communication to Mr McFarlane in that an Irish representative will be seeing Speaker O'Neill in the United States tomorrow, and will be suggesting that he should discuss the question of United States support for an Anglo-Irish agreement with the President. There is thus a danger that, if we do not send a message fairly soon, the White House may hear of the matter from Speaker O'Neill before there has been any communication from here.

3. In the circumstances I wonder whether the Prime Minister would be prepared to consider allowing me to send a shorter message, on the lines of the draft attached, to Mr McFarlane at this stage, warning him of a possible approach from Speaker O'Neill and indicating that he can expect to be filled in on the background when he comes to see the Prime Minister.



4. I am sending copies of this minute to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

MS

for ROBERT ARMSTRONG

*Approved by Sir Robert a
signed in his absence*

24 September 1985

DRAFT MESSAGE

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG TO MR ROBERT MCFARLANE, WHITE
HOUSE

VIA CABINET OFFICE CHANNELS ONLY

MESSAGE BEGINS

As you will know, negotiations are taking place between the British and Irish Governments about a possible agreement concerning Northern Ireland. Neither Government has yet taken a decision of principle on whether to conclude an agreement but it is very possible, subject to further progress, that an agreement could be signed by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach around the end of October.

2. I will not go into detail about the substance of the agreement in this message, since the Prime Minister will wish to do this herself when you come over at the weekend. But I understand from preliminary contacts which British and Irish representatives have had with American officials that the United States would be likely to welcome an agreement of the kind being negotiated. A strong statement of welcome by the President would give great pleasure to the Prime Minister, and I

believe, to the Taoiseach, and would most certainly help to increase the chances of success of the proposed agreement.

3. The agreement would commit the two Governments to work together, and with external support, to promote economic and social progress in both parts of Ireland and to encourage dialogue and reconciliation there. We have heard that the United States Government might consider reinforcing its support for an agreement by giving a considerable amount of money for such purposes. Such generosity would of course be warmly welcomed by both the British and the Irish Government.

4. I understand that a representative of the Irish Government may shortly suggest to Speaker O'Neill that he should discuss the question of United States support for an Anglo-Irish agreement with the President. The purpose of this message is to say that the British Government is aware of this approach to the Speaker, and that we think it would be most helpful if American support for an Anglo-Irish agreement were to be reinforced by financial means as well as expressed in a statement. We can offer you later more detail on

how this might be set up, if the United States Government did decide to respond in this way. The only thing I need to add here is that both we and the Irish attach importance to it being seen that American generosity is a freely offered response to an agreement and not an inducement provided in order to encourage the two Governments to conclude an agreement.

5. The success of an agreement would depend very much on careful presentation. Both Governments are therefore extremely keen to prevent elements in the agreement becoming public in advance, since this would make it impossible to present the whole agreement in a balanced manner if it is concluded. We are therefore restricting knowledge of the proposed agreement to a very few people - though there has inevitably been a good deal of more or less ill-informed speculation. We should be most grateful if you could do the same in Washington.

Reasons: Res Ag



1