

PRIME MINISTER

I think he must justify for our viewpoint. The Irish are still trying to convey the message that

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

There are people who have some kind of authority in N.I. The consultation status will give enough weight as it is - the word 'decisions' & their role must be clear.

I attach RTA's note of his most recent round of negotiations with the Irish.

Decisions are required on the following points:

(i) the Irish want to amend Article 2(a) to make clear that Committee is concerned "with relations between the two parts of Ireland"?
The Unionists will certainly object to this formulation because it weakens their contention that the agreement should deal only with matters between Ireland and the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the reality is that the Committee will deal with the parts of Ireland.
Agree to accept this if Irish accept some of our more important points (see below)?

Simply
"between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland"
would be better.
The present formulation would be acceptable to the Unionists - it would remain their 9/1/54 and efforts to deal with Ireland as a whole.

(ii) The Irish objected, on presentational grounds, to our proposal to insert in Article 2(b) the words "the decisions and". RTA proposes as a compromise to omit the whole phrase "the decisions and administration of" so that it would read "there is no derogation from the sovereignty of either the UK Government or the Irish Government, so that each retains responsibility for government within its own jurisdiction".

It seems to me essential to have the words "decisions and" in the text and this was clearly agreed by Ministers.

Agree to instruct RTA to insist on inclusion?

We should still insist for our formulation

(iii) The Irish have accepted our definition of the Secretariat's functions in Article 3 but still want the word "permanent" in front of it. I can't believe that this is a make-or-break point for the Irish. And presentationally it is much better without it. Agree that RTA should continue to press for omission of "permanent"?

As the whole arrangement is subject to review we can't have the word permanent. Also it is not for (iv) to be permanent. It is...

On accession to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism a compromise is proposed. In the communique we would add to the list of subjects on which the new Committee would concentrate "measures which would give substantial expression to the aim of ensuring that there is public confidence in the administration of justice". (paragraph 7)

In return, the Irish would say that it was "the intention of his (i.e. the Taoiseach's) Government to accede as soon as possible to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism". (paragraph 8). It would apparently anyway take them at least 18 months to get the legislation through the Dail.

The weakness is that it is only an 'intention', and applies only to the Taoiseach's Government (whose prospects aren't marvellous). It is not a four-square commitment.

It seems to me a matter for political judgement whether what the Irish are offering is enough (and whether what we are offering in return is too much). You may want to take the views of colleagues including the Lord Chancellor?

Yes

(v) The Irish still hanker to call the "Committee" the "Intergovernmental Conference". RTA is willing to concede this and Tom King is prepared to go along. It still seems to me that saddling

ourselves permanently with something called an Intergovernmental Conference is likely to provoke the Unionists and give the impression that the whole affair is more substantial than we intend it to be.

Agree to "Intergovernmental Conference"?

Or, stick to "Committee"?

*It isn't a
Conference. It
is a committee.*

not

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL

10 October 1985

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PRIME MINISTER

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: TIMING OF SUMMIT

Sir Robert Armstrong's note attached says that the Irish are still hankering for an early date for a Summit and signature of the Agreement. Ideally they want it in the period 1 - 4 November. One reason is to have it before the SDLP Conference.

I do not think you can or should agree to this for a lot of reasons:

- I doubt you will be able to take the draft agreement in Cabinet until 31 October (it would be a mistake to try to do so immediately on your return from New York on 25 October).
- we have set aside 2-4 November for work on your speeches for the Debate on the Address and the Lord Mayor's banquet.
- you cannot see Paisley and Molyneux until about 30 October. There needs to be a decent interval between your seeing them and a summit.
- I do not think we should let the Irish bounce us. Its a very important decision.
- the Irish fear that the SDLP Conference might obstruct an agreement. But if they do, it will be the Irish government which is in difficulty, not us.

Agree to stick to 15 November as the target date?

Yes no

C.D.P.

C D POWELL

10 October 1985