

CONFIDENTIAL

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

15 Jan
APL
CCSG



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

(1)

Charles Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

Prime Minister 17th December 1985

Yes no Agree to go ahead with
trial lunch for Northern Ireland
opinion formers in January?

Dear Charles,

CDP 17/12

In your report of the discussion on Northern Ireland which took place after Cabinet at the end of November, you asked if we could let you have two to three groups of opinion formers who might be invited to meet the Prime Minister for a talk and lunch.

As you know Unionist opposition to the Agreement is based on resentment that the Republic's Government should have a formal opportunity to influence policy in Northern Ireland (however that opportunity be defined), that Parliament's attitude to the Britishness of Northern Ireland no longer demonstrates the understanding and close bonds which they believe would have been evident a decade or more ago, and that it is by no means evident to Unionists that the Agreement will deliver on security. Even those Unionists who accept that the Agreement is here to stay, and want to make it work, probably share these feelings to a greater or lesser degree. But they are seeking to persuade the doubters to develop those parts of the Agreement which might enable the people of Northern Ireland to take responsibility for their own affairs, hence an emphasis on exploring the devolution option and on the SDLP's being more forthcoming in its support of devolution and of the Province's security forces.

The Secretary of State has given further thought to this proposal and suggests in the first instance that you arrange only one lunch, for those on the attached list, in early January and in the light of experience of that occasion we reconsider how any further meetings might be tackled. The list contains people from a mix of backgrounds but all are people who support the Union (though they may not be members of either Unionist Party as such). Most of those named would be anxious to find a constructive way forward but would be concerned about the wider implications of the Agreement. The purpose of the meeting would need to be carefully presented but something on the lines that 'this would be an opportunity for the Prime Minister to exchange views on Northern Ireland and on constructive progress within the Province' might strike the right note. We see the

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/meeting

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meeting as an opportunity for strengthening and in some cases re-building the confidence of the Northern Ireland pro-union community in the Government, and for leaving them in no doubt as to the Government's firm determination to make the Agreement work in a positive way.

We will arrange for briefing to be prepared once the meeting has been set up. We would assume there would be no publicity attached to such meetings.

I am copying this letter to Joan McNaughton (Lord President's Office), Len Appleyard (FCO) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

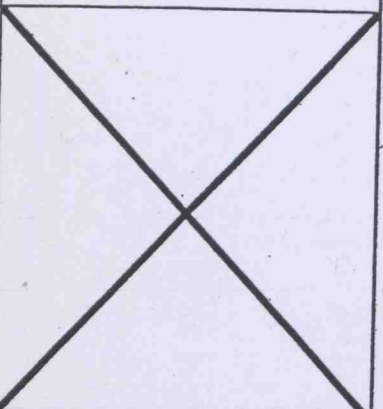
*Yours Sincerely
Neil Ward.*

N D WARD

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ssd

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>1810</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: <i>Attachment to Ward to Powell dated 17 December 1985</i>	
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Instructions for completion of Dummy Card

Use black or blue pen to complete form.

Use the card for one piece or for each extract removed from a different place within a piece.

Enter the department and series,
eg. HO 405, J 82.

Enter the piece and item references, .
eg. 28, 1079, 84/1, 107/3

Enter extract details if it is an extract rather than a whole piece.

This should be an indication of what the extract is,
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Sign and date next to the reason why the record is not available to the public ie. Closed under FOI exemption; Retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958; Temporarily retained; Missing at transfer or Number not used.

SIMILAR LETTER TO

Bishop of Clogher
Mr W R G Martin
Professor Desmond Rea
Mr V Haslett
Sir Peter Froggatt
Mr N G D Fergusson
Mr Dawson Moreland



10 DOWNING STREET

19 December 1985

From the Private Secretary

I am writing to extend to you on behalf of the Prime Minister an invitation to lunch at No.10 Downing Street on Wednesday 15 January at 1230. The Prime Minister's intention is that the occasion should be an opportunity to exchange views on developments in Northern Ireland and on the prospects for constructive progress within the Province.

The Prime Minister very much hopes you will be able to attend, and looks forward to seeing you.

If you would like to reply by telephone, could you please ring 01-930 4433 and ask for Mrs. Goodchild.

(C. D. POWELL)

The Right Reverend The Bishop of Down and Dromore

CONFIDENTIAL
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Charles Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

13th December 1985

Ore/Aden

CR 10/11

Dear Charles,

In your report of the discussion on Northern Ireland which took place after Cabinet at the end of November, you asked if we could let you have two or three groups of opinion formers who might be invited to meet the Prime Minister for a talk and lunch.

As you know unionist opposition to the Agreement is based on resentment that the Republic's government should have a formal opportunity to influence policy in Northern Ireland (however that opportunity be defined), that Parliament's attitude to the Britishness of Northern Ireland no longer demonstrates the understanding and close bonds which they believe would have been evident a decade or more ago, and that it is by no means evident to unionists that the Agreement will deliver on security. Even those unionists who accept that the Agreement is here to stay, and want to make it work, probably share some of these feelings and uncertainty. But they are seeking to persuade the doubters to develop those parts of the Agreement which might enable the people of Northern Ireland to take responsibility for their own affairs, hence an emphasis on exploring the devolution option and on the SDLP's being more forthcoming in its support of devolution and of the Province's security forces.

With this in mind we propose three lists, with names drawn from a mix of backgrounds but all of people who support the Union (though they may not be members of either unionist party as such). Some of those named (especially in List B) would be anxious to make the Agreement work and find a constructive way forward; others remain profoundly cautious and even pessimistic; others will be strongly opposed (especially in List C). There remains a doubt about the attendance of those with a political link (the Lord Mayor, Council Chairmen and Mr Peter Smith), but we think it would be worthwhile to see if they would accept. The purpose of the meeting would need to be carefully presented, and you may wish to have a word about this. Something on the lines that 'this would be an opportunity for the Prime Minister to exchange views on Northern Ireland and on constructive progress within the Province' might strike the right note. We see the meetings as opportunities for strengthening and in some cases re-building the confidence of the Northern Ireland, pro-union, community in the Government, and

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for leaving them in no doubt as to the Government's firm determination to make the Agreement work in a positive way.

If you let me have an idea of dates we can arrange for briefing to be prepared. We assume there would be no publicity attached to these meetings.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours Sincerely
Neil Ward.*

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FIRST GATHERING

Rt Rev Dr R H A Eames	Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Dromore
Rt Rev Gordon McMullan	Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher
Mr Peter Smith QC	Barrister; (also Adviser to UUP and therefore may refuse)
Mr Roy Lilley	Editor Belfast Telegraph
Mr Desmond Smyth	Managing Director UTV
Mr Willoughby Wilson OBE	Senior Surgeon Royal Victoria Hospital
Dr George Chambers CBE	Managing Director Milk Marketing Board (former Chairman CBI in Northern Ireland)
Mr W R G Martin	President Ulster Farmers Union
Mr John Spence	Chairman NI Training Authority. Managing Director Richardson's (ICI)
Professor Desmond Rea	Dept of Business Studies Ulster University. Convenor of important discussion groups seeking cross community political progress
Mr V C Haslett	Insurance Broker; Chairman NI Sports Council

Reserves

Mr Rowan Hamilton	Chairman Local Enterprise Development Unit
Professor Desmond Greer	Vice-Chairman SACHR; Law Lecturer

SECOND GATHERING

Sir Desmond Lorimer	Chairman Northern Bank; Chairman IDB (to 31/12)
Sir Peter Froggatt KB	Vice-Chancellor Queen's University

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Sir Oliver Napier*

Solicitor (former leader
Alliance Party) (Catholic)

Ald John Carson CBE

Lord Mayor Belfast (therefore
may feel he has to decline)

Sir Robert Kidd KBE

Jt Chairman Co-operation North;
Chairman Allied Irish Banks
Belfast; former Head NI Civil
Service

Rt Rev James Mehaffey

Bishop of Derry and Raphoe (CofI)

Mr Tom Rainey

Managing Director Rothman's;
Chairman CBI (NI)

Mr Noel Stewart

Accountant; Senior Partner
Cooper Lybrand; President ICA
Ireland 1981

Mr N A D Ferguson JP DL

Chairman NI Housing Executive
Ex UUP politician

Mr Denis Faulkner

Chairman Gallaghers NI; Hon
Colonel UDR; brother of late
Lord Faulkner

Sir Myles Humphreys JP

Chairman Police Authority; and
wide NI interests

Reserves

Dr Norman Taggart

Methodist Church, Belfast

Mr J V Simpson

Chairman Eastern Health and
Social Services Board; broad-
caster; University lecturer

Mr F A Mackle*

NI Secretary, Irish Nat
Teachers Association

THIRD GATHERING

Mr Ralph Brown

Chairman Dungannon District
Council (UUP)

Mr Jack Allen OBE

Chairman Antrim District
Council (UUP). Former Chairman
Sports Council

Capt W Henderson

Owner, Belfast Newsletter

Sir John Swinson OBE

Chairman, NI Tourist Board

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Mr Dawson Moreland CBE

Ormeau Bakery; business interests in farm feedstocks etc; Chairman Health Central Services Agency

Mr C Toby Hurst OBE

Businessman; Chairman Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Mr Ben Wilson

Senior Partner, Peat Marwick Mitchell

Mr Eric McDowell

Chairman Designate IDB (wef 1.1.86)

Mr Ivan Tinman

Managing Director, Downtown Radio

Mr P A McCartan

Area Secretary APCCS; Member IDB

Reserves

Dr J Kincade

Principal, Methodist College, Belfast. BBC NI Governor

Mr Victor

NI Bankers Association

Mr J McCusker

NI Public Service Alliance

(or any key figures unable to attend one of the first two meetings)

* Members of minority community

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