

Ref. A086/80

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet 9 January: Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will probably wish to report on matters concerning the implementation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and on the situation in Northern Ireland, in particular -

- a. The next meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference: the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has today agreed, in the face of strong Irish pressure, that the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference should take place on 10 January, rather than being delayed until after the by-election on 23 January. But he has insisted that the meeting should be in London;
- b. the very satisfactory development that the three prisoners on hunger strike have started eating again;
- c. the atmosphere in the Province as we approach the by-elections, with continued widespread unionist antipathy to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and continued terrorism by the IRA.

2. You could take the opportunity to ask whether we have put to the Irish Government a list of specific proposals on security co-operation, as you urged when you saw the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 19 December (Mr Powell's letter of that date). It will be essential at the IGC this week to press the Irish for early results on this front, and to let it be known publicly that we have done so. You might also wish to ask the Secretary of State whether, as seems to be the case, the arrival



of the Spearhead battalion to reinforce the Army in Northern
Ireland has passed without public criticism - and indeed whether
it has reassured unionist opinion.

MS

for

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

8 January 1986

CONQUEROR