

MR POWELL *CSO*

NORTHERN IRELAND

This note on the media arrangements for the presentation of any agreement might be useful. David Gilliland, Director of Northern Ireland Information Office, asked to see me today and agrees with the points below.

You assured me that the idea of dispensing with a press conference had been dropped.

✓ Against this background, I assume the idea would be for a joint press conference with the two Prime Ministers supported by myself and my opposite number, Peter Prendergast, with myself calling the questioners. I assume we should let it run for up to 30 minutes, or less in the unlikely event of its dying on its feet.

NIO would look after media security.

✓ The trickiest question is whether the Prime Minister (as well as Garret Fitzgerald separately) should give radio and television interviews afterwards. My own view is that the Prime Minister (and Dr Fitzgerald) should not. We should allow radio and television to record and film the press conference but we should not go beyond that. My reasoning is:

[but Brian Walden on the Sunday]

- we have a vested interest in curbing the Irish (whose presentation will always be more extravagant than ours); this is facilitated by an open press conference. Extravagance is encouraged by separate interviews
- the media find it less easy to attack en masse than they do in man-to-man interviews; therefore on balance an open press conference standing on its own serves our purpose

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- I have no desire to see the Prime Minister interviewed by some of the aggressive and committed Northern Irish radio and television reporters; their approach simply makes for negative presentation

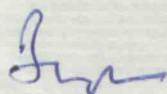
- since there are several audiences - Unionist, Nationalist, Southern Irish, British mainland, American and to some extent European audiences - to address, that superficially argues for separately tailored interviews. But separately tailored interviews on the first day can only serve to fuel suspicion. The line of least resistance is probably a self standing open press conference.

We might persuade Dr Fitzgerald to forgo first day separate radio and television interviews if the Prime Minister volunteered this at the outset.

✓ We cannot, however, rule out the Prime Minister's need subsequently to broadcast. Indeed this may be a necessary weapon in the war against extremism. But we should keep Day 1 clear.

✓ NIO propose that on Day 2 Tom King and Nick Scott should take the lead on the airwaves, pressing home presentation and picking up comments/attitudes etc.

We shall need to consider nearer the time who gives separate briefings - and who should receive them - eg New York Times, Christian Science Monitor. + Peter Utley.



BERNARD INGHAM

3 OCTOBER 1985