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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 October 1985

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 10 October conveying the Northern Ireland Secretary's wish that his Parliamentary Private Secretary should attend an internal Northern Ireland Office meeting next week on the presentational aspects of any Anglo-Irish agreement. This would involve Dr. Mawhinney seeing the text of the draft agreement.

The Prime Minister has decided that Dr. Mawhinney should not be included in the meeting nor shown the papers. She wishes information on the subject of the possible Anglo-Irish agreement kept to a very restricted circle. She thinks that briefing on presentation should only be done very shortly before signature of an agreement.

I am copying this letter to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

(C.D. Powell)

Jim Daniell, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office

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Ref. A085/2627

MR POWELL

Dr. Mawhinney

not to be included.

We must keep the info under a very restricted circle. Don't

Prime Minister

this confirms RTA's opposition to the proposal to let

Dr Mawhinney see the documents. CDP

I have seen the letter in which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland seeks the Prime Minister's leave to invite his Parliamentary Private Secretary, Dr Brian Mawhinney, to attend a meeting to be held next week about the presentation of an Anglo-Irish Agreement and to give Dr Mawhinney a copy of the draft Agreement.

11/K.

Anything for which he is absolutely prohibited.

2. As you know, the Irish Government and the Taoiseach personally, are greatly concerned about the leaks that have already taken place. Earlier this week they reported that a "Minister" in Blackpool was showing journalists a copy of the draft Agreement; and it was evident that Dr Mawhinney was high on their list of suspects.

3. That was probably unjust; the Northern Ireland Office tell me that Dr Mawhinney does not have, and has not seen, a copy of the Agreement, and the Secretary of State did not have a copy in Blackpool.

4. Nonetheless I am sceptical about including Dr Mawhinney in the circle of those who have access to the details of the package and to the draft Agreement at this stage. Signature and publication is still at best somewhat off - and might never happen. Dr Mawhinney's advice on presentation seems unlikely to be crucial so early as this. He is known to have close contacts amongst the unionists - including some fairly extreme unionists. It would certainly be more difficult to defend ourselves against the charges that we were leaking information about the Agreement to the press, if we were not able to continue to say, as I

have been saying to Mr Nally, that Dr Mawhinney cannot be the "Minister" who has been showing the Agreement to the press because he has not had or seen a copy.

5. So, quite apart from the rules relating to the access of Parliamentary Private Secretaries to classified information, I have to say that in the context of the negotiations with the Irish, it would be better if the Secretary of State could be asked not to include Dr Mawhinney in his meeting next week, and not to show or give him a copy of the draft Agreement until we are more sure about and get closer to signature.

Robert Armstrong

for

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

(approved by Sir Robert Armstrong
and signed in his absence)

11 October 1985



RTA will
advise
against
CDP 11/X

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

You will wish to
consider this report
carefully.

The backbenchers will
certainly have to be
prepared & briefed carefully.

But the agreement - if
reached - is a month
away; & extending the
circle of those involved
increases the risk of leaks.
Mr. MacWhinney is of course close
to the Unionists & recently
had a long meeting with
Dr. Paisley. CDP 10/X.

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Nigel Wicks Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Prime Minister
Agree?

10 October 1985

Dear Nigel

No - as indicated in
a memo note.
It is for the Downing CDP
Protection that
we should not
be there. not

The Secretary of State wishes his Parliamentary Private Secretary to attend an internal NIO meeting next week on the presentational aspects of any Anglo-Irish agreement. Mr King regards his attendance as important, given the need to ensure that backbenchers are fully briefed as soon as possible after signature. The papers for this meeting and the subject matter under discussion will be classified secret. I am therefore writing, in accordance with paragraph 40 of Questions of Procedure for Ministers, to ask you to seek the Prime Minister's authority for Dr Mawhinney's involvement in this and subsequent meetings on this subject.

In addition, Mr King would like authority to show Dr Mawhinney the latest draft of the Anglo-Irish agreement.

I am copying this letter to Michael Stark.

Yours sincerely
J A Daniell

J A DANIELL
Private Secretary

Any meeting on
protection can only
be done within 24 hours
of the signing.
MB