

PRIME MINISTER

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

You are to meet the Northern Ireland Secretary, Foreign Secretary and Sir Robert Armstrong tomorrow to consider outstanding matters. Sir Robert is to meet Mr. Nally again next Tuesday. The Irish Cabinet will meet that same day to consider whether to accept the agreement.

The points to consider at the meeting are:

The Location of the Conference and the Secretariat

A. The Taoiseach has sent you a rather stern message on this insisting that the Conference should meet, and the Secretariat be located in Belfast, from the beginning. He implies that this is unnegotiable; and that it is up to us to provide whatever level of security is necessary.

B. The Northern Ireland Secretary has also discussed the matter with Mr. Barry and repeated his objections on security grounds. He has also pointed out the political sensitivity of having the Secretariat located at the heart of the Northern Ireland Government in Stormont.

C. The Cabinet Office have suggested a compromise under which we agree in principle that the first meeting takes place in Belfast (and the Secretariat set up base there); but that a decision is postponed until we can assess the security situation at the time.

My only comment is that this issue is in effect the first tussle of wills under the Agreement: allowing the Irish to face us down will be a bad precedent.

Staffing of the Secretariat

The Irish persist in their intention to send Lillis (a Deputy Secretary). The Northern Ireland Office are not keen: but he does know the negotiations and the agreement inside out. You will want to ask the Northern Ireland Secretary whom we intend to send.

Border Security

The Taoiseach's message says this is settled. You will want to assure yourself that the Northern Ireland Secretary is satisfied.

Convention on Suppression of Terrorism

The Irish are still considering whether they can agree to sign the Convention now.

United States Views

You will want to ask Sir Robert Armstrong to report.

Parliamentary Handling

We understand in confidence Enoch Powell intends to rise before you make your statement on 18 November and ask the Speaker to rule on the constitutionality of the Agreement. You might ask the Northern Ireland Secretary to ensure that his officials brief Bradshaw so that he can advise the Speaker in advance what to say.

Practical Arrangements for the Signing

D The Foreign and Commonwealth Office have written about this, setting out various scenarios for various possible locations. You will want to instruct Sir Robert Armstrong to insist on Aldegrove. (The Irish alternative, Dromoland

Castle, has already been mentioned in the Irish Press.)

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Bernard and I agree that the sensible format is:-

- meeting followed straight away by
- signature (Press will be present) and
- press conference
- lunch
- briefing of Northern Ireland Party Leaders.

Reply to the Taoiseach

You will wish to ask Sir Robert Armstrong to prepare a draft reply to the Taoiseach taking account of the results of the meeting to issue on Monday.

CDP

CDP

8 November, 1985.