

PRIME MINISTER

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MEETING ON NORTHERN IRELAND: 16 JANUARY

This will be attended by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir R. Armstrong, Mr. Andrew, Mr. Goodall, Mr. Cartledge and Sir Philip Woodfield.

The purpose is to discuss how to handle discussions with the Irish Government in the run-up to the next Summit: and how to make progress in discussions between the political parties in the North.

You have seen the papers by Robert Armstrong and Douglas Hurd. Points which need to be covered are:

- (i) prospects for progress in the discussions with political parties in the North are dim, unless the Government takes the initiative in floating ideas on how devolution can be attained. When will such ideas be ready? When is it the intention to float them? How does this relate to the timing of the Anglo-Irish Summit? To the Northern Ireland local elections in May?
- (ii) the relative merits of Model A and Model B in Sir R. Armstrong's paper. (The FCO and Sir Robert Armstrong support Model B, Northern Ireland Secretary inclines to Model A.) You will want in particular to challenge the assumption that Model A can only be presented as a fall-back if discussions on Model B reach deadlock. Surely it is more realistic and straightforward to start with Model A. ✓ If in one or two areas it seems, in the course of negotiations, that we could go beyond it that would be for consideration. But if we start with Model B, the likelihood must be that we shall reach exactly the same deadlock as at the Chequers Summit.

- (iii) timing of the Anglo-Irish Summit. * ~~~~~
~~~~~\* have mentioned February, which is quite unrealistic. It might be better not to set a date at all until we see how far we can get in preliminary discussions.
- (iv) nature of further contacts with the Irish Government. Should we continue to use the Armstrong/Nally channel? Should there be Ministerial contacts before you and the Taoiseach meet? There will inevitably be pressure from the Taoiseach for a bilateral at the European Council on 29/30 March.
- (v) tactics for your meeting with John Hume on 17 January.

C.D.P.

C.D. POWELL

15 January 1985

\*~\* Passage deleted and retained under Section 3(4)  
Wayland  
20 June 2014