



file

67
10

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has noted your minute of 22 January reporting your conversation with the Taoiseach. She welcomes the Taoiseach's conclusion that it would be better not to have a full-scale Summit until a positive outcome can be reasonably assured.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr. Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Mr. Daniell (Northern Ireland Office).

(C.D. Powell)

CST

23 January, 1985

Prime Minister

8

Helpful at least that the
Taoiseach realizes that
there is no point in
going for an early
Summit.

C.D.P. 22/11

Ref. A085/213

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

I shall be reporting separately on my talks with Mr Nally in Dublin yesterday. This minute reports a short meeting that I had with the Taoiseach after the official talks were over.

2. I began by conveying your good wishes to him. He asked me to give his good wishes to you.
3. He said that he had not seen or heard directly from Mr John Hume since your meeting with Mr Hume on 17 January, but he understood that Mr Hume was very pleased with the meeting, and had seen it as positive and constructive. That boost to Mr Hume's confidence was very important at the present time. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) had been destabilised by the aftermath of the Chequers Summit - more so than Dr FitzGerald himself and the Irish Government though they had not had an easy time politically. Mr Hume would be better able to restore the morale of his party on the basis that his own confidence had been restored by his meeting with you.
4. Dr FitzGerald said that public opinion polls taken last year after the publication of the Forum Report and before the Chequers Summit had shown that nationalist opinion was more open than it had ever been to the possibility of solutions of the Northern Ireland problem that fell short of Irish unity. Polls which had been taken in the last few weeks indicated that, though the political climate had been affected by the aftermath

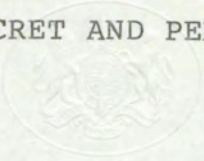
of the Chequers Summit, fundamental openness to new types of solutions remained. The Taoiseach was therefore still very much in business for the kind of agreement with the British Government that had been under discussion.

5. The Taoiseach had not of course had an opportunity to study the British proposal which I had been discussing with his officials, though I think that he had probably had a chance to read it and I am sure that he had had a quick oral report on it. He said that his impression from what he had been told was that our proposal explored what he described as the "shallower" end of the possible options. The Irish Government would still be concerned to explore the "deeper" options on the lines described in the British Statement of Position of 4 November, before the Chequers meeting. I said that, in constructing our latest proposal, we had departed from earlier ideas in that we now envisaged not three separate arrangements for security, legal matters and political matters but a single body within the framework of the Anglo-Irish Inter-governmental Council, which could meet in a number of different modes. The Taoiseach said that his impression was that our proposal was dominated by security matters. It would be impossible for him and his colleagues to present to Irish opinion an agreement which looked as if it was tying the Irish Government into the British Government's policies on security in Northern Ireland without giving them what he described as a "sufficient involvement" on other matters in Northern Ireland. I said that our latest paper included proposals for the new AIIC body to concern itself with measures to recognise national identity, to protect human rights and to prevent discrimination. We thought that the list of measures indicated as being for consideration in this area largely coincided with those which the Irish Government themselves thought should be subject to inter-governmental consultation. I said that I had no authority to go beyond the proposal; but the first paragraph of the British paper did indicate that other topics might be added by agreement. I

recognised that the Irish Government would want to study the British Government's proposal in the light of my conversations with Mr Nally earlier in the day. They would no doubt want to consider whether they felt it necessary to revert to some of the earlier ideas, or whether the framework now proposed might provide a basis within which they could make whatever further proposals they thought fit. I indicated that I thought that it would be easier to reach agreement if it could be within the general framework of our latest proposals.

6. The Taoiseach made it clear that he was concerned about the timetable and the need for early resolution of the discussions. He would like to bring matters to a conclusion in time for the local elections in Northern Ireland in May. It might not be possible to achieve finality in that time scale; if not, perhaps it would be possible to give some indication on the basis of which the two Governments were working for a settlement.

7. The Taoiseach recalled that he had agreed with you that there should be another Summit meeting early in the New Year. He was not very keen to have a full-scale Summit unless and until a positive outcome could be regarded as reasonably assured. I said that I believed that you would share that view. I recalled that you would of course be meeting the Taoiseach in the usual course of business at the European Council towards the end of March, and you would be able to have a meeting with him in the margins of that. The Taoiseach obviously thought that that might be rather late in the timescale which he had in mind, and emphasised that, if at any time you thought that a private and informal meeting with him might be useful, he would be prepared to come to London, with some other engagement (which could easily be arranged) as a cover. I said that I would report this to you. It might be that, when my conversations with Mr Nally were a little further advanced, we should have a better idea as to whether this might be useful.



8. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

22 January 1985

conqueror