



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 March 1985

CDD . 14/3

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Charles,

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

1. For your personal eye only, I enclose a copy of a letter I have just written to Robert Armstrong. In case it is not self-explanatory, the background is that Robert Andrew has argued, on the basis of the discussion at the Prime Minister's meeting on 8 March and your letter of the same date, that in Dublin on 22 March the two Secretaries of State should take a significantly more minimalist line in various respects than that reflected in the British Proposal of 21 January. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would not be happy with this because he believes that it would play into the hands of the sceptics among Garret FitzGerald's own colleagues if we were to give the impression that we have been negotiating in bad faith: and the fact is that the British Proposal of 21 January was expressly put forward by Robert Armstrong as having the approval of the Prime Minister and the two Secretaries of State.

2. There is no action for you to take on this: but I thought you ought to be aware of the argument.

Yours ever

David

A D S Goodall



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 March 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB GCVO
Cabinet Office
Whitehall SW1

Dear Robert,

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS: NORTHERN IRELAND

1. At your meeting yesterday which Robert Andrew and I attended there was some discussion of what exactly was meant by "our original option A proposal" in Charles Powell's letter of 8 March to Len Appleyard; and it was suggested that this might be intended to refer to something more minimalist than the "British Proposal" of 21 January.

2. I have now looked up the back papers. As far as the Prime Minister is concerned, the story starts with your minute to Charles Powell of 11 January to which were annexed two alternative "Models" (Models A and B) as a possible basis for continuing the discussions with the Irish Government. (These were not, at that stage, described as "proposals"). At the Prime Minister's meeting on 16 January, it was agreed to proceed on the basis of Model A, but the Prime Minister said that it "should be improved presentationally to make it more attractive to the Republic and more suitable as a negotiating document" (Charles Powell's letter of 16 January to Len Appleyard). This was done, and with your minute to the Prime Minister of 17 January you submitted what you called "a revised version of Model A in a form suitable for giving to the Irish" which was headed "British Proposal". Charles Powell's minute to you of 18 January conveyed the Prime Minister's approval of this "revised version of Model A" with one amendment. The text, incorporating the Prime Minister's amendment and with no other change, was the text given to the Irish as the British Proposal of 21 January. My conclusion from all this is that "our original option A proposal" means the British Proposal of 21 January. Since then the text has been through several further versions, taking account of the Irish response and subsequent official discussions.

3. It is perhaps worth adding that, in your minute to the Prime Minister of 17 January, you said that you proposed, if

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she and the two Secretaries of State agreed, to tell the Irish that the British Proposal "reflected the outcome of careful Ministerial consideration here of the positions reached at Chequers"; and this was in the event the language you used in putting forward the paper at our meeting with the Irish on 21 January (paragraph 2 of your reporting minute to the Prime Minister of 25 January). You may recall that Michael Lillis subsequently gave as the reason why the Irish side had accepted the text of our proposal as the drafting basis for their own response the fact that it constituted an authoritative statement of the British Government's position as approved by the Prime Minister, and that it had been considered by the Irish Cabinet on that understanding.

4. I am sending a copy of this letter to Robert Andrew.

Yours ever

David

A D S Goodall

Copy: R J Andrew Esq CB
Northern Ireland Office