

Mufax Please.

29/3

RS 230/4

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PS/PUS

Reason.
cc. Mr Angus
Mr Sullivan ✓
Miss Owens
Mr Angus

c.c. Mr. Bloomfield - M
Mr. Brennan
Mr. A.W. Stephens - M
Mr. Merifield - M
Mr. Innes - M
Mr. Spence - M
Mr. Bell
Miss Elliott
Mr. M. Elliott - M

ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT; UNIONIST REACTIONS

... In your minute to me of 18 November (Mr. Brennan's minute to me of the same date also refers) you asked for a "game plan" covering the likely reactions of unionists to the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I attach a note prepared by Miss Elliott in collaboration with PAB and Central Secretariat.

The note takes account of the Secretary of State's clearly expressed view that he did not want any long narrative. It therefore seeks to serve the purpose of an aide memoire, identifying the kinds of action we are likely to face, their general timescale, and the issues that they raise. It did not seem to be helpful to try to do more than that when events are moving so rapidly. But we can, of course, expand and elaborate if you think that would be useful.

A

D. CHESTERTON
22 November 1985

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ACTION WHICH THE UNIONISTS HAVE TAKEN OR MIGHT TAKE TO PROTEST AT THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT, IN CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Implications</u>
1. Withdrawal of cooperation with NIO Ministers	As of 15 November	Unpleasantness at public occasions. Complications in the conduct of Assembly business, although contact with officials has continued; but recent indications are that the parties see the disadvantages for them and may revert to normal practice. Effects on Ministerial correspondence. The balance of advantage is for Ministers to continue to conduct business in normal fashion.
2. Boycott of Area Boards and other statutory bodies	Progressive withdrawal as bodies meet	Even if all unionist councillors withdraw, the bodies continue to operate. There are no signs yet that all Protestant members will do so. There are adequate provisions for filling vacancies, although fresh candidates might not be forthcoming. Substantial vacancies could cause problems.
3. Legal challenge to the Anglo-Irish Agreement	Application for judicial review lodged on 20 November. Mr Justice Mann decided it was not a proper matter for review. Possible renewed application in open court - not before 25 Nov.	Parliamentary debates may take place as planned. Unlikely to impinge on first meeting of Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.
4. Belfast protest rally	23 November	Depends on turnout and whether trouble free. Letter from PM to Mr Kilfedder to be published on 23 November.
5. Resignation of Westminster seats and by-elections	Application for Chiltern Hundreds likely on 27 Nov; writ moved on 29 November; by-elections on 19 November, <i>December?</i>	Impact will depend on number of resignations (not yet certain that all will do so); whether elections take place on same day; turnout on the day (the results will not be a surprise, although Sirn Fein may win one marginal seat). The Government

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	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Implications</u>
		should do nothing to obstruct the normal course of events for fear of being seen to suppress and be afraid of disagreement.
6. Westminster boycott if no referendum granted after by-elections	After Christmas	Political difficulties, but no actual impediment to Government business in Parliament.
7. Assembly boycott if no referendum	Early new year	Possibility growing more remote. Alliance & DUP want to keep it going. They will realise that decision on fresh elections will be made around that time. The latter is a lever for the Government.
8. District Council boycott if no referendum	Later in 1966	All unionist-controlled councils will probably have suspended business by Christmas, but probably with delegation of authority to carry on daily business. However, in February they are obliged by law to strike a rate; this cannot be delegated. But if they resign en masse, 11 of the 18 unionist-controlled councils could continue, 7 would not have sufficient quorum. DOE have sufficient powers to take emergency action.
9. Civil disobedience, non-payment of rent, rates, electricity and water	After political protest routes exhausted	Present arrangements for dealing with non-payment of such items (Benefit Allocation System) would be strained and could not cope with mass refusal. Ministers could emphasise tradition values of Protestant ethic to counter any pressure for such action.
10. Industrial action - a one-day or prolonged strike	On present assessment, unlikely	Contingency plans have been made.