

MHOM/BEL 001/02

FROM MR P J WOODFIELD

TO MR H F T SMITH

GR 450

CONFIDENTIAL

HOME OFFICE TELNO 12 OF 2 SEPTEMBER TO MR SMITH

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE HOME SECRETARY'S REPLY TO MR FAULKNER'S MESSAGE CONTAINED IN YOUR TELEGRAM NO 48 OF 1 SEPTEMBER. THE TEXT HAS NOT YET BEEN AGREED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. AS SOON AS IT HAS BEEN I WILL TELEPHONE YOU AND AUTHORISE YOU TO DELIVER IT.

*Authentically received
at 12 noon. KS-
2
9*

BEGINS.


1. THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE, WHICH I HAVE SHOWN TO AND DISCUSSED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. I AGREE THAT SOME AMENDMENTS ARE REQUIRED IN THE DRAFT PROPOSED AND I HOPE THAT THE SUGGESTIONS I HAVE TO MAKE WILL COMMEND THEMSELVES TO YOU. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO MEET THE POINTS YOU HAVE PUT FORWARD, AND I AM ANXIOUS THAT WE SHOULD REACH AGREEMENT WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY SO THAT WE CAN BE IN A POSITION TO TAKE, AND TO BE SEEN TO BE TAKING, AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL INITIATIVE.

3. I AGREE THAT THE PHRASE "FURTHER WAYS AND MEANS" COULD BE MISLEADING THOUGH, OF COURSE, IT WOULD COVER, FOR EXAMPLE, SUCH SUGGESTIONS AS YOU MAKE IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF YOUR MESSAGE ABOUT REVISION OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND PARLIAMENT. I SUGGEST THAT IF WE SUBSTITUTE THE WORD "AGREED" FOR "FURTHER" IT WOULD MEET THIS POINT.

4. I QUITE AGREE THAT AT CHEQUERS WE ALL RECOGNISED THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES A COALITION GOVERNMENT WAS NOT A PRACTICAL PROPOSITION, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY ONE CANNOT RULE IT OUT FOR EVER IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. I SUGGEST WE COULD MEET YOUR POINT ON THIS IF IN THE LAST FEW WORDS OF THE DRAFT STATEMENT WE CUT OUT THE PHRASE "PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENT" AND SUBSTITUTE THE WORD "LIFE". I THINK WE ARE REMOVING WHAT, ON REFLECTION, I AM INCLINED TO AGREE LOOKS TOO MUCH LIKE MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN THE CABINET ITSELF.

the suggestion



5. SO FAR AS PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS IS CONCERNED, I AGREE THAT THE WORDS "ALL SECTIONS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND COMMUNITY" DO GO RATHER WIDELY, THOUGH I THINK IT WOULD CLEARLY BE WRONG TO EXCLUDE SPECIFICALLY SOME SECTIONS FROM BEING CONSULTED. BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE STATEMENT I SUGGEST WE SUBSTITUTE FOR THE WORDS WHICH YOU DISLIKE THE PHRASE "OTHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES". THIS SHOULD LEAVE US ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY. I CERTAINLY AGREE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING AN UNWIELDY TALKING SHOP AND I DO NOT THINK IT SHOULD BE NECESSARY TO HAVE MEETINGS ALL THE TIME INVOLVING ALL CONCERNED. BUT HERE AGAIN WE NEED NOT BIND OURSELVES IN ADVANCE.

6. AS TO TIMING, I TAKE YOUR POINT THAT THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY WOULD RESENT A PARLEY IN A STATE OF ACTIVE DISORDER WITH THE IRA. OF COURSE THERE CAN BE NO POSSIBLE QUESTION OF THIS, BUT AS YOU AND I HAVE BOTH OFTEN STRESSED, THE IRA ARE NOT THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY. I AM VERY CONCERNED AT THE BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COMMUNITIES, WHICH IN ITSELF IS ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE IRA AND WHICH CLEARLY CANNOT BE TOLERATED BY EITHER GOVERNMENT. IT SEEMS TO ME OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE, AND THIS IS REALLY THE MAIN PURPOSE OF MY PROPOSAL, TO RESTORE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE MINORITY FOR A PROPER DISCUSSION ON THEIR PLACE IN THE LIFE OF NORTHERN IRELAND, FOR IT IS THE DUTY OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, AS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND GOVERNMENT, TO PURSUE THIS OBJECTIVE AS ONE OF OVER-RIDING IMPORTANCE.

P J WOODFIELD