

E.R.

11/7
CONFIDENTIAL

Mr P.

PC 118/7
TP 127/7
PP (B)/84/3358/RE

Mr Merifield

cc: PS/PUS (L) (M)
PS/Sir E Bell
Mr Brennan o/r (M)
Mr Angel (M)
Mr Carvill o/r
Mr Abbott (M)
Mr Reeve

38

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. PUS was grateful to you and to Mr Reeve for calling on him this morning. This note summarises the conclusions of the discussion.

2. It was felt that there was a spectrum of possible political arrangements for Northern Ireland with complete power-sharing at one end and unfettered majority rule at the other. Any arrangement would occupy a point on this spectrum; if there was to be a strong Anglo-Irish dimension the emphasis might be more on direct rule to tempt the Unionists in and if the Anglo-Irish aspect were to be played down the balance might have to swing more towards power-sharing to accommodate the SDLP. A common framework with a strong 'participating' element might be evolved which would encompass both variants and of which the boundaries would need to be defined before detailed negotiations could be entered into.

3. One possibility would be to have an elected Assembly along the present lines from which functional committees for transferred matters could be chosen on a proportional basis. Chairmanship would also be held in proportion to party strengths in the Assembly and executive powers would rest with the chairman-in-committee. The Secretary of State and the UK Ministers could oversee this structure, with another UK Minister for security and financial strategy. There would be problems not least over lines of accountability and such a structure might be best instituted for a trial period.

4. There would need to be an "appeals tribunal" which would advise the Secretary of State on issues where decisions could not be reached within the system; a formal procedure would have to be evolved whereby the Assembly might be able to refer formal majority and minority views for resolution. Such a tribunal might be on a 50/50 Unionist/Nationalist basis: it was noted that this might on recent indications be acceptable to the DUP.

5. The Assembly might have powers to initiate legislation: a Bill

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E.R.

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might pass through its stages at Stormont and then be referred to Westminster for negative resolution.

6. Mr Reeve was invited to draft a paper outlining such a model and illustrating it by describing how the Londonderry name-change issue would have been processed. Mr Abbott's Division would no doubt be able to assist. The model's relationship to the 1982 Act would need to be brought out, as would the fact that the framework would have to be strong enough to cope with tensions and temporary walkouts. The paper should also draw on what the NI parties might be prepared to commit themselves to.

7. It would be helpful if the paper could be circulated in draft form by the end of next week.

SAMack

S A MARSH
PS/PUS (B)

11 July 1984

-2-

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