

SECRET AND PERSONAL

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Anglo-Irish Talks, London: 13-14 October 1985

M. Brennan

Copies

Mr. Nicolson

Mr. Stephens

Mr. Chastelain

Mr. Hill

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Most of the points have been recorded in Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 14 October to the Prime Minister. Work is in hand on the handling of questions to both Heads of Governments about Article 1 of the Agreement. Work also continues on "Questions and Answers"; the next discussion will be in London on Friday, 25 October. This note records other points made on 13 and 14 October.

Secretariat

2. The Irish described the NIO paper on "Illustrative Situations" as 'superb', 'ingenious' and 'encouraging'. They questioned whether, on occasions such as that foreseen in example 1 in the paper, it would be appropriate for the Irish side in the Secretariat to put forward a paper about the views and proposals of the Irish Government. If such a paper leaked, it would make it much harder for a compromise on the matter in hand to be reached. It might be preferable for the Irish, at least in the early life of the Secretariat, not to commit too much to paper. We said that there was no need for formal papers if the Irish preferred to operate orally. We noted that it was interesting that the discussion of the NIO paper was concentrating on this procedural point; it suggested that views on both sides about the overall operation of the Secretariat were now rather close.

3. There was discussion about the channel of operation of the two Secretaries. The Irish Secretary would have direct contact in Dublin with various desk officers in the DFA, and the United Kingdom Secretary with various parts of the NIO.

4. In a separate discussion at lunch on 14 October, Mr WALLY said that the Secretariat should deal with minor matters at official level, involving Ministers only when necessary. Mr ANDREW said that, if resolving difficulties at secretarial level meant taking decisions, then the UK Secretary would be referring back to the NIO for those decisions. There was a general feeling in the meeting that some apparent differences would turn out to be ephemeral and could be dissolved, rather than resolved, at secretarial level.

5. The Irish said that terrorist groups in Northern Ireland would try to provoke incidents designed to cause differences between the two Governments and thus make the new Committee unworkable. Mr ANDREW said that it was hard for the Secretariat, in the wake of a particular incident, to do more than note that a police investigation had started. In another part of the day's talks, Mr LILLIS suggested that, when an unarmed civilian was shot, as had happened during the weekend in Belfast in an incident involving the UDR, the member of the security forces involved should be suspended without dishonour pending the outcome of enquiries. Mr ANDREW said that this would not be right in the absence of prima facie evidence of misbehaviour by the officer concerned.

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6. It was agreed that we would probably miss the deadline of early November for informing leaders of the United States Congress that an agreement would definitely be signed within a week or two. We should therefore seek statements of support for the agreement from the President and Congress which would foresee the possibility of financial support. We should then aim to get the money voted by Congress in February/March 1986. Mr DONLON is checking whether this timetable would make money available for the US financial year 1986 or only in the following financial year.

Next Armstrong/Nally Meeting

7. This is provisionally planned for the evening of 29 October and the whole of 30 October in Dublin.

u M

C L G Mallaby

Cabinet Office
15 October 1985

Distribution:

Mr Andrew, NIO
Mr Goodall, FCO
Mr Brennan, NIO
Mr Stark, CO