

AI 3/K

F. R.

CONFIDENTIAL

HCS/10/98

- cc. PS/SOS L&B -M
- PS/Mr Scott L&B -M
- Mr Stephens
- Mr Brennan -M
- Mr Gilliland
- Mr Merifield
- Mr Blackwell
- Mr Innes
- Mr Elliott

PUS L&B-M

ANGLO-IRISH TALKS AND THE NICS

1. Having agreed with you yesterday on the need to take action to stifle speculation about the role of the NICS, and given Mr Gilliland a form of words to use on the subject, I was surprised and disappointed to see in Tel.No.725 (a correction of Tel.No.724) that the Ambassador in Dublin, speaking to Mr Barry, had stated that:

"If we signed such an agreement we had to recognise that there were large numbers of unionists in the Northern Ireland Public Service who would be unsympathetic to its [ie an Anglo-Irish agreement] aims."

2. I telephoned Dublin and spoke to the Ambassador. I told him about the "Newsletter" material in the morning and the action we had thereafter taken with the media to nip off further speculation of this kind.
3. I went on to emphasise how important it was that the NICS, which had long been a vital part of the cement of such stability as we enjoyed here, should not be used as a political football. In that context I thought the choice of words he had used with Mr Barry regrettable, since the clear inference was that those whom he had described as "unsympathetic" to an agreement might in some way seek to subvert or impede it. I wanted him to be quite clear that in my view the NICS, which has faced many changes and crises over recent years, would work loyally to make a success of any arrangements which Ministers decided at the end of the day to put into place.

CONFIDENTIAL

E. R.

CONFIDENTIAL

4. The Ambassador said he was sorry and that he had clearly used words he ought not to have used. What could he now do to set matters right? I said that in further contacts with the Irish he should point to the statement made yesterday, and seek to remove any impression which Irish Ministers might have that Civil Servants in Northern Ireland were likely to be in some way disloyal or disruptive.

5. You will wish to decide whether, in addition to my contact with the Ambassador, you want to make some point to the FCO. Telegrams such as this enjoy a pretty wide distribution (including, as I see on my copy, Buckingham Palace) and I would not want any such statement to remain on the record as the accepted view of HM Government.

KPB

K P BLOOMFIELD

30 October 1985

CONFIDENTIAL