

DESIC BY 15:30 HRS.

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CC PS/SOS (L) - M
PS/Mr Scott (L&B) - M
PS/PUS (L&B) - M
PS/Mr Bloomfield 10/12
Mr Stephens
Mr Brennan - M
Mr Ferneyhough
Mr Chesterton - M
Mr Innes
Mr Gilliland
Mr Merifield
Mr Bell - M
Mr Elliott

PS/SOS (B)

LOCATION OF INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE, CHIEF CONSTABLE'S VIEWS

When the Chief Constable called on Mr Scott yesterday, he mentioned his reservations about siting the Inter-Governmental Conference at Stormont. The estate itself had too large a perimeter to guard. Closing the grounds, which were open to the public, would make it very clear what was about to happen. However many men were deployed, some demonstrators would get in. The estate was in an area containing a massive anti-Conference population; East Belfast, Holywood, Newtownards, Dundonald, Comber. Demonstrators could close roads. Access could be guaranteed only by helicopter. The proximity of Maryfield made it easy, too, for protesters to move quickly between the two sites.

On Saturday, Mr Robinson had been encouraging farmers in Coleraine to have their slurry tanks available on the Wednesday for blocking roads. His force could not guarantee that opponents of the Agreement would not be able to make propoganda out of the arrangements for safeguarding the Conference. Nonetheless they would keep them out of the Conference area, indeed do anything in the field that the Secretary of State asked, if it were professionally possible. But he would have preferred to avoid that sort of confrontation with the police, involving not just extremists, but ordinary decent people. He recognised that at some stage, the police might have to take a position opposed to such people; but for the time being they were trying to conciliate them, for example by talking to them about the routes of their marches, giving

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a much help as possible, and he would prefer to keep his powder dry for any such necessary confrontation.

Handwritten signature: A. J. Whysall

fed
A. J. WHYSALL
PS/Mr Scott

10 December 1985

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