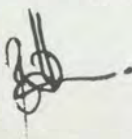


DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT

1. Attached for information are copies of a message from the Secretary of State to NICS staff, and an information leaflet on the agreement prepared by Northern Ireland Office.
2. If any member of staff wishes to have access to the text of the agreement, copies are held by the Establishment Officer, Mr D K Austin, who is located at Netherleigh (Telephone Belfast 63244, Ext 339).



R J O'HARA
18 November 1985

R B Gamble R11



ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT: MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Since my appointment as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, I have been much impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the officials, whether from the NICS or the Home Civil Service, who have maintained the public services in Northern Ireland at such a high standard of efficiency through difficult times. You have a vital and continuing role to play. Some of you may be concerned about changes which may flow from the Anglo-Irish Agreement which has been signed today by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach and I want to send you a personal message about its implications.

The Prime Minister and I will shortly be reporting to Parliament, which must approve the provisions of the Agreement before it is brought into effect. I have no doubt that its contents and its significance will be widely discussed in the coming days. It cannot, of itself, solve all our difficult and complex problems. What it can do is to provide a framework for working together; a framework within which, I hope, the two Governments who have signed the Agreement, and the two traditions in Northern Ireland, will develop steadily a mutual trust and confidence.

As the Agreement makes clear, there will be no derogation from the United Kingdom's sovereignty. The Government remains fully responsible for the decisions and administration of government in Northern Ireland, with officials' responsibilities unchanged to Ministers who are in turn accountable to Parliament. Detailed guidance about the implementation of the Agreement, and the work of the Intergovernmental Conference and the Secretariat which is to be established to serve it, will be issued to those who will need it.

I know that I can look to all of you, as loyal and professional public servants, to support me in pursuing the wider objectives of the Agreement: not only peace and the defeat of terrorism in Northern Ireland; but also political stability; mutual recognition and respect for each others' rights, traditions and aspirations; freedom from discrimination and intolerance; and widespread participation in the internal structure and processes of Government.

15 November 1985

THE ANGLO-IRISH AGREEMENT : INFORMATION LEAFLET PREPARED BY THE NIO

Introduction

An Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed by the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach at Hillsborough on 15 November.

Both Governments believe that the Agreement offers a unique opportunity for Northern Ireland to break away from division and violence, and to make real progress towards peace and stability. The people of Northern Ireland will wish to study the Agreement carefully. This leaflet sets out its broad outline, and explains how it will affect the Government's operations and policies.

The Agreement covers three main areas:

1. The Status of Northern Ireland. Under the Agreement the UK and Irish Governments enter into new and binding commitments: both Governments have agreed that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority in the Province: and that at present a majority do not want such a change.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement will, when it has been approved by the United Kingdom and Irish Parliaments, be lodged at the United Nations. The recognition given in it of Northern Ireland's status will be formally binding in international law.

Both Governments also undertake that, should a majority in Northern Ireland ever formally consent to the establishment of a United Ireland, then they will support the necessary legislation to bring this about.

2. Increased Co-operation between North and South in three crucial areas: the fight against terrorism; economic, social and cultural matters; and the promotion of reconciliation and respect of the two main traditions in both parts of Ireland. The Government regards increased co-operation in these areas as a gain for all the people of Northern Ireland.
3. An Intergovernmental Conference consisting of UK and Irish Ministers, in which the Irish Republic can put forward views on a range of political, security and legal matters. These will include human rights, electoral arrangements, the use of flags and emblems, the avoidance of discrimination, relations between the security forces and the minority, confidence in the administration of justice, extradition and prisons.

It is hoped that the Conference, by offering the Republic a voice on those aspects of the Province's affairs that particularly affect the nationalist community, will encourage the minority to identify more closely with the institutions of Northern Ireland.

The Conference will have a small secretariat of UK and Irish officials: but will have no decision-making powers. The Government will consider the views that the Republic puts forward on behalf of the nationalist community, and will try to resolve any differences. But actual authority over the affairs of the Province remains with the UK Government and Parliament.

The RUC and the UDR

The Intergovernmental Conference will consider practical ways of improving cross-border security, and of improving relations between the security forces and the nationalist community. But it will not have any operational responsibilities. Responsibility for the RUC will remain with the Chief Constable, and responsibility for the UDR will remain with the General Officer Commanding.

Devolution

The Government is firmly committed to the establishment of a devolved administration in Northern Ireland acceptable to both sides of the community. Nothing in the Anglo-Irish Agreement will impede this. Indeed the Irish Government has declared its support for devolution, and the Agreement allows it to put forward views on how it might be encouraged. The Agreement makes it clear that the Conference would not consider any matters that had been devolved to a local administration.

Local Consultation

The Government will, of course, continue to seek, value and take into account the views of all local constitutional parties and politicians, including the Northern Ireland Assembly, on all matters affecting the Province. The Anglo-Irish Agreement will not in any way prevent or discourage this. In taking decisions, the Government will be guided by:

- all the advice it receives;
- its commitment to respect and recognise both traditions in Northern Ireland;
- the need to reconcile the two traditions.

Conclusion

The Anglo-Irish Agreement is a threat to no one but the terrorists. It represents a great chance for the people of Northern Ireland to put behind them the division and violence that has bedevilled the Province for far too long. The Government hopes that all people of sense and goodwill in the Province will welcome it as a basis on which to work together, and build a better future for Northern Ireland.