



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON

17 Grosvenor Place  
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26 September 1986

cc: Taoiseach  
 Deputy  
 Deputy for Justice  
 Attorney General  
 Secretary

Mr Nally  
 Mr Uvel  
 Mrs Russell  
 A-1  
 A-1 Rec.

Dear Assistant Secretary

Lunch with Charles Powell, Principal Private Secretary  
 to the Prime Minister

*[Handwritten signature]*  
 29/9

Powell expressed the strong conviction that three-man courts are not on. He said

- it is very important that we deliver the Convention, but we must either deliver it or, if we can't, drop it.
- It is not on for us to say we need three-man courts in order to deliver the Convention and, despite the fact that they appreciate that it is not simply a negotiating or bargaining counter on our part, they dislike having it put up to them in this way.
- They have analysed the case on three-man courts and they do not believe it is a very good one, that the disadvantages are bigger than any possible advantages. He said their analysis is not based on the views of the Northern Ireland judiciary and Hailsham/Lowry only, but has been done by London. He said Havers shares the analysis.
- They accept that something needs to be done on the administration of justice but want to look elsewhere: he mentioned the abolition of supergrass trials as a personal preference.
- If, however, we are hooked on the three-man courts point, we had better get the point and the implications of failure across again to his boss. (I mentioned that I understood our Attorney General is meeting Sir Michael Havers next Monday and he said that is welcome and we should perhaps seize that opportunity too to get our message through.)

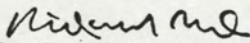
More generally, he listened to our ideas on procedure with the parliamentary body, and said he thought Mrs Thatcher would find this quite acceptable (subject to Wakeham's and King's approval).

He believes the Agreement and the problem of the Unionists will take some years to work out, and that we should all be prepared for a long haul involving successive Governments on both sides (if that is what those Governments want).

In the meantime, he feels we must harden ourselves to resist the gloom and doom scenarios which will, he expects, continue to plague us.

He expressed appreciation for the Taoiseach's sensitivity when, during the Hague meeting, Mrs Thatcher briefly lost her concentration.

Yours sincerely

  
Richard Ryan  
Counsellor