

MURKX IMMEDIATE PL

CONFIDENTIAL

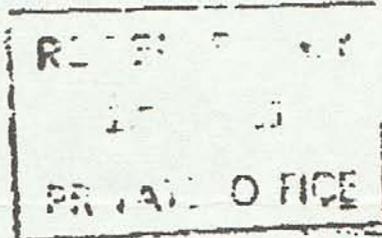
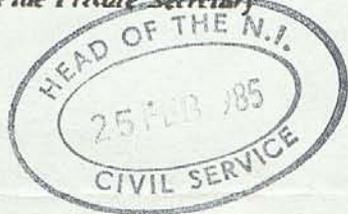
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10 DOWNING STREET

1 cc PS/SQS (B) M
M - PS/PUS (L+S) M
M PS from Blenheim
Mr Brennan
M - Mr Merrifield
Mr Chesterton

From the Private Secretary



21 February 1985

Mr Lyon

Dear Gen.

2. PA. NEW
1. Mr Blenheim
2. A1/4
25/2

Prime Minister's Visit to Washington: Ireland

When the Prime Minister called on the Speaker of the House of Representatives on 20 February, Mr O'Neill said that he was aware of the substance of the discussions being conducted between the British and Irish Governments on Northern Ireland. He thought it very important that these should be brought to a successful conclusion. The Prime Minister explained the British Government's views on the ideas in the New Ireland Forum report, and confirmed that she and Dr FitzGerald would continue their dialogue. But any solution must be based on the principle of consent. Mr O'Neill said that compromise was essential in politics and he hoped that the Prime Minister would be flexible. The Prime Minister said that the issues were of immense difficulty, but there was no doubt of her goodwill in her continuing discussions with Dr FitzGerald.

I might also record that Rick Burt, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, told David Hannay and me that he had been fully briefed by the Irish Government on the Anglo-Irish discussions (which was more than we had offered him). We would be well advised to make the most of Dr FitzGerald's reasonableness. He added that he knew that Dermot Nally had flown to Washington to brief senior Congressional figures.

The extent to which the Irish Government are briefing others on our confidential talks with them is worrying and I expect that the Prime Minister will wish to raise this with Dr FitzGerald.

I am copying this letter to Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Charles Powell
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