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E.R.

CC: PS/SOS (B&L) - M
PS/PUS (B&L) - M
PS/Mr Bloomfield *seen 31/7*
Mr Brennan - M
Mr Merifield
Mr Lyon - M
Miss Elliott - M
Mr A Wood - M

cc AI 3/1

Mr Gilliland

ANGLO-IRISH TALKS: PUBLIC PRESENTATION

To Mr. Bloomfield 29/7
The Secretary of State was grateful for your submission of 23 July. He would like to consider further on his return from leave. In the meantime, bearing in mind the points made in Mr Brennan's note of 26 July and the fact that the timetable for the talks has lengthened, he does not think that you need take any action to arrange briefings of the national media.

RJC

for J A DANIELL
Private Secretary

29 July 1985

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PS/Secretary of State (B&L)

CC PS/PUS (B&L)
PS/Mr Bloomfield
Mr Brennan
Mr Merifield
Mr Lyon
Miss Elliott
Mr A Wood

23/7

The Secretary of State asked me last week to consider how we might handle the public presentation of the outcome of the Anglo-Irish talks. Initially, of course, it will be for Bernard Ingham to take the lead following the Summit meeting, but we will need to shoulder a very considerable part of the follow up in terms of the media.

I will talk to Ingham nearer the time and clear our lines on this.

If there is an agreement with Dublin or if there is progress towards an agreement we are likely to receive media support in the Dublin, London and United States press. The reaction in Northern Ireland will be strongly against and will be denounced, certainly by the News Letter, as a "sell out". It seems probable, however, that while media reaction will be strong the greater problem will be that facing the security forces in the face of street violence.

Should there be a failure to reach agreement then we will have neither a media nor security problem within Northern Ireland; but we will be faced with widespread unfavourable reaction in the Irish Republic, the United Kingdom and the United States. I do not feel sanguine about our ability to turn that particular tide but it will be essential for Ministers and officials to act as quickly as possible to take the initiative in the United Kingdom and the United States to try to get our case across.

Already the belligerent noises of the unionist parties is beginning to attract media attention (see today's Guardian editorial) and it is almost certain that, pre-Summit and pre-agreement or lack of it, we will see expressed a widespread hope in the editorial columns for a successful solution.

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As soon as the Secretary of State returns from leave I would welcome a discussion with him, Ministers and officials, at which I would wish to have considered proposals for handling the press in the wake of agreement or non-agreement. In the meantime it would be helpful if the Secretary of State were able to talk on a completely confidential basis with the editor of the Belfast Telegraph (this is being arranged) and with the editors of the Times, the Guardian and the Daily Telegraph. The objective would be to indicate to them the way in which the Secretary of State and Prime Minister have sought, in the face of considerable unionist opposition, to achieve an understanding and a good working relationship between the two Governments. It would also be possible to indicate to them the very delicate balance which must be struck within Northern Ireland itself if an agreement is to be effective and acceptable.

Beyond that it is difficult to go at the moment but there is a substantial and difficult job to be done from early September onwards and when we see a little more clearly the direction in which we are going I will make a submission to the Secretary of State recommending the ways in which we should handle the presentational aspects.



D GILLILAND
23rd July 1985

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