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PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH MR NALLY

I attach a minute from Sir Robin Butler covering the Irish draft proposal for the Declaration between you and the Taoiseach. A commentary from the Northern Ireland Office is attached.

The document is not one you could put your name to. It is ambiguous, and damagingly ambiguous. It talks of: "the need for both parts of Ireland to be unified in their approach to all major issues" (paragraph 2) and (paragraph 3) of "healing of division". In the next sentence it says "both of them [UK and Ireland] recognise the ending of division can only come about with the agreement and cooperation of the people North and South". In other words, the references to the ending of division would commit you to the goal of unification.

The fourth paragraph says: "the British Government acknowledge it is the wish of the people of Britain to see the people of Ireland live together in unity and harmony". Paragraph four also has you reiterating on behalf of the British Government that we have no selfish strategic political or economic interest in Northern Ireland and that our sole interest is "to see peace, stability and reconciliation". This ignores the fact that the economic prosperity of the people of Northern Ireland is a matter of concern to the British Government - and is one factor in Unionist (and some Catholic) opposition to unification.

The fifth paragraph appears to acknowledge that unification can only come about by consent but it is weasel-worded: "the Irish Government accepts ... that the right of self determination by the people of Ireland as a whole cannot in practice be achieved except with the agreement and consent of the people of Northern Ireland and that it must, consistent with justice and equity, respect the democratic dignity and civil rights of both communities".

Mr Nally is coming here to see Robin Butler on Friday. This is a very good opportunity to kick this whole exercise into touch. I think Sir Robin Butler should make clear:

i. That the draft is unacceptable for the reasons outlined. He should refer back to the doubts which you expressed to Mr Haughey as to whether it would be possible for any statement to be drafted which reflected our position and also met with the requirements as seen by the Irish Government.

ii. The draft proves your point that this was very much the personal initiative of Mr Haughey. It cannot usefully be taken forward until his successor is in office and you and he have met.

*Stephen*

J S WALL

4 February 1992

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