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bc Sir P.C.

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

MR. HATFIELD  
CABINET OFFICE

Anglo/Irish Relations : Northern Ireland

BK 11

The Prime Minister has noted the two papers submitted under cover of Sir Robert Armstrong's minute of 12 June. The papers are to be discussed at a meeting on 21 June.

On paragraph 30 of the first paper dealing with Irish political involvement in Northern Ireland, the Prime Minister does not like the idea that the proposed resident representative or Commissioner might be a member of the Irish Government. The paper of course make clear that this is something which the Irish themselves might suggest, not a proposal to be put forward by the UK.

On the second paper dealing with repartition, the Prime Minister has noted that the maps to which reference is made in paragraph 4 were not attached to her copy. Could you please send them to me.

I am sending copies of this minute to Mr. Appleyard, Mr. Sandiford and Mr. Jay.

C.D. POWELL

18 June 1984



Prime Minister. 18 (4)

Ref. A084/1697

PRIME MINISTER

Anglo-Irish Relations: Northern Ireland

In my minute of 5 June I said that I had arranged for a paper to be prepared as a basis for discussion dealing with ways in which the Irish Government might be given some measure of association with the administration of Northern Ireland at the political level without compromising British sovereignty. This paper is now submitted. It has been prepared by Sir Philip Woodfield in consultation with the other members of the senior officials' group, but is intended to be a personal and illustrative view of what might be possible. Also attached is a paper by the Northern Ireland Office, cleared by the officials' group, which analyses the problems which would be involved in any proposals for re-partition or re-drawing the boundaries of Northern Ireland with a view to producing a more homogeneous population. Arrangements are being made for a Ministerial meeting to discuss these two papers, together with my minute of 5 June and Mr Goodall's minute of 31 May to Mr Coles, in the week beginning 18 June.

2. If as a result of discussion at that meeting you decide that the possibility of according the Irish a degree of political involvement in the North in return for amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of their Constitution should be pursued, I think the next step would be to authorise me to have a further informal talk with Mr Nally. In addition to conveying our response to the ideas put to me by Mr Nally on 11 May, the purpose of my talk with him would be to probe Irish thinking in a strictly exploratory way, and without any commitment on either side, so as to get some idea of what their bottom line on political involvement is likely to be, and of the terms in which they would consider seeking to amend their Constitution.





3. I am sending copies of this minute and the attachments to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Antony Acland, Mr Robert Andrew, Sir Philip Woodfield and Mr David Goodall.

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

12 June 1984

conqueror



Irish Political Involvement in Northern Ireland

This paper examines the Irish proposal that they would seek by a referendum to amend Articles 2 and 3 of their Constitution if HMG were prepared to agree to a substantial political involvement of the South in Northern Ireland. The Irish ideas on what this might amount to are on their own admission fluid. They will have in mind the proposals put to Sir Robert Armstrong in his discussion with Mr Nally on 11 May, but are clearly open to alternative ideas from us.

2. The abandonment of the territorial claim and the admission of United Kingdom Sovereignty coupled with a solemn commitment to the principle of consent would be an enormous gain if the price is right. Some Unionists will refuse to accept that it makes any difference, but many will acknowledge that it removes a major grievance of long standing and makes many kinds of co-operation with the South possible which have hitherto seemed to them an admission of the territorial claim. The SDLP (Mr Hume) are, we are told, agreeable, and the Alliance Party would undoubtedly welcome it. It will not in the short term cause the IRA to abandon terrorism but Irish involvement in the North could well in the longer term diminish support for the IRA in the minority community.

3. Irish involvement in Northern Ireland can be divided into three sections -

- (i) security;
- (ii) } local administration - environment, health, education, agriculture and the like;
- (iii) the interests of the Nationalist minority.

Each is considered in turn in the following paragraphs.

Security

4. Although the RUC have made great strides in becoming accepted as an impartial and professional police force, there are areas of Northern Ireland where they can only operate with



substantial support from the Army. These areas are: most of the west bank of Londonderry, South Armagh and West Belfast. There are other areas where Catholic Nationalists do not give the basic support which the police need to operate to a good standard of efficiency. Such support is essential if the police are to make significantly greater progress in dealing with the IRA.

5. The indications from the Irish Government are that they are willing to become involved in security in the belief that this will do much to make police activity acceptable to the minority. This must be looked at against Dr Fitzgerald's long-standing wish to see an all-Ireland police force at some future date.

6. Any improvement, particularly a dramatic one, in a concerted attack on the terrorists must be welcomed. We must be careful, however, not to go for an ideal solution which does not work and makes the security situation worse.

7. What therefore should be tried for and what avoided? There are two aspects - security policy and security operations.

#### Security Policy

8. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, like his predecessors, has regular meetings with his senior officials and with the Chief Constable and the GOC to assess the security situation, review policy and take decisions about the development of policy both generally and in relation to immediate threats. The Secretary of State also has occasional ad hoc meetings with the Irish Minister of Justice at which security is discussed. Such meetings could with advantage be put on a more regular footing and we could make it plain that the two Ministers accepted a shared responsibility for the consideration and formulation of security policy assisted by their respective security chiefs. Final decisions would be taken by the respective Ministers, but influenced by their consultations. This would be justifiable on the ground that terrorists, whether IRA or Protestant para-militaries (who though fairly



quiescent could be reactivated) present a threat to the two Sovereign Governments. The IRA threat to both is obvious, but Protestant violence could produce a violent reaction in the South as well as the North.

9. Such shared responsibility even though not extending to decisions could be awkward - e.g. the role of the UDR, the use of plastic bullets to control riots and the holding and questioning of people under our Emergency Provisions Act are controversial in the South. But closer involvement of the Irish Minister of Justice could produce a greater recognition of realities in the South and would be helpful abroad, and reciprocity would inevitably arise from shared concern with common problems.

10. There are other areas where shared responsibility for the formulation of policy could be advantageous - e.g. the development of police training and professional inspection, and of methods or handling complaints against the police.

#### Security Operations

11. The Irish have vague ideas about a new police force operating in difficult areas in Northern Ireland under joint command, perhaps as a precursor to a new all-Ireland police force. In the proposals put forward by Sir Robert Armstrong we have ourselves envisaged a joint Commission which could work towards an all-Ireland police force. But there are dangers in pursuing an ideal at the expense of the police force we now have. Despite shortcomings and occasional incidents of gross misbehaviour, the RUC is an effective force, the main defence against the terrorists and a body which has suffered many casualties. The maintenance of its morale is crucial and it is highly respected by police forces in Great Britain.

12. The Irish would like in a general kind of way to see members of their police on the streets in Northern Ireland, but they are beginning to see the difficulties; they know that they could be IRA targets but the Irish could not agree that the British Army should protect them.



13. From our point of view there need be no objection in principle to a growing Irish police presence as part of the common fight against terrorism, but it must make the security situation better, not worse, and to be acceptable to Unionists must be seen to be working.

14. This suggests that in the field of security operations modest developments, like liaison officers in border posts - and perhaps at RUC divisional HQs and in the main HQ in Belfast - are practical ways of involving the Irish, with a willingness if Ministers and security chiefs on both sides agree to move jointly towards more ambitious schemes in the light of experience.

#### Law Commission

15. Both sides have agreed that a Commission to work towards the harmonisation of the criminal law would be desirable; and the Armstrong proposals envisaged the possibility of associating judges from each jurisdiction with criminal trials conducted in the other.

#### Local Administration

16. The Irish ideas about their involvement in the governing of Northern Ireland need to be examined against the prospects of a local devolved administration.

17. The first question is: are there circumstances in which the Official Unionists, the SDLP and the Alliance Party would be prepared to take part in some devolved administration? The DUP (Dr Paisley) can be left on one side for the moment.

18. The question cannot of course be given a definite answer. Although the Unionists have returned to the Assembly and have used language in their recent policy statement which is notably less controversial than in the past, their willingness to accept a role for the minority sufficient to satisfy nationalists must remain doubtful. Mr Hume has been closely involved in Dr Fitzgerald's latest proposals which assume a devolved administration and would be hard put to it to hold back if a package otherwise acceptable to him were agreed between London



and Dublin. What form a devolved administration might take - committee chairmanships proportionate to party strengths, heads of Northern Ireland Departments, etc. would need further examination and consultation. A fully devolved power-sharing executive on the Sunningdale model is probably the least likely to get acceptance from the Northern Ireland parties. It is however the model in which it is simplest to examine the Irish suggestion that a devolved executive should be nominated by the British and Irish Government jointly.

19. In the sketchy outline in which we have it, <sup>Irish suggestion</sup> the presents difficulties. It carries the assumption that HMG is linked specially with Unionists. This is partly true, but the consistent affirmation of HMG has been that it governs Northern Ireland in the interest of all the people, and whatever sharing of responsibility with the South might emerge, we do not wish to be put in the position in which, although the sovereign power, we represent specially or exclusively the interests of the Union party or parties.

20. Secondly there are problems in accepting that the Irish Government have a right to nominate members of a Northern Ireland executive to represent people who have no democratic say in the composition of the Government of the South.

21. In practice involvement of either London or Dublin in appointments to a local executive would be pretty theoretical. Who should be nominated and who would be acceptable to others would emerge from horse-trading between leading members of the Northern Ireland parties.

22. An acceptable compromise might be an agreement between the British and Irish Governments that if devolved responsibility took the form of an Executive, posts in it should be shared according to the party strengths of those willing to take part; that individuals would be nominated taking account of the wishes of the parties; and that the two Governments would consult



together, if the local politicians could not agree, on the general shape of the Executive - i.e. who should have which Department. The appointments, however, should be made by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

23. Some other forms of local administration, e.g. majority rule over local authority type functions with safeguards for the minority like weighted majorities leave less room for proposals for Irish involvement. The thorny problem of nominations would not arise if committees elected their own chairmen. The Irish would be involved behind the scenes with the SDLP if not more openly in bargaining for an agreement but after that their role could be minimal though their active support would be important.

24. The DUP might or might not refuse to have any part in this. Dr Paisley has never found himself in a situation in which political skill could win him authority in the governing of Northern Ireland as distinct from opposing others. There is no doubt that he would like to get some executive authority; whether he would be prepared to share it with members of other parties remains to be tested. How far his attitude matters depends on the firmness of the commitment of the Official Unionists to any package and whether the para-militaries re-emerge as a powerful force; even if they did emerge there is evidence that they will not allow Dr Paisley to direct them.

25. If a devolved administration could be established, Irish involvement in day-to-day matters would not be very visible. If it cannot be established the prospect is much more difficult. The Irish tentative suggestion of shared authority over all Northern Ireland matters except defence and foreign policy looks much more like and comes much closer to joint sovereignty. It would be hard if not impossible to gain the acquiescence of even moderate Unionist opinion. It would also be likely to produce frequent disagreements between the two Governments with each being pressurised by Unionists and Nationalists who would themselves have freedom from any responsibility.



26. This is not to say that if a devolved administration could not be established and direct rule had to continue that we could not agree to more extensive consultation with the Irish about Northern Ireland affairs, but whether that would be sufficient to carry a referendum on an amendment of the Constitution must be doubtful - and therefore it must be doubtful whether the Irish Government would be prepared to advocate it.

27. The conclusion on this point is that some form of devolved administration is an important part of any package and that one of our objects should be for the two Governments to exercise maximum pressure and political skill in bringing Unionist and constitutional Nationalists to some kind of agreement. This will be a difficult task. Even if Mr Hume is prepared to participate, the Green wing of his party could split off with subsequent benefit to Sinn Fein. As to the Unionists, if they see that agreement between London and Dublin on some Irish involvement depends on their co-operation in a devolved administration they will do all they can to make this a veto over any agreed package. But not all the cards are in their hands. They can bring down a local executive but they cannot bring down HMG. If the two sovereign governments decide that their combined interests require closer co-operation, there is a limit to what Unionists can do to frustrate them while remaining part of the United Kingdom.

#### Interests of Nationalist Minority

28. A devolved administration covering most day-to-day matters makes it easier to select comparatively minor but controversial and symbolic things (the tricolour, the Irish language, reception of Irish television and the like) in which Irish political involvement could be admitted. This is an area in which we can be more forthcoming in having a visible Irish presence.

29. What form might such a presence take? At a minimum, the Irish could be invited to appoint a Consul-General in Belfast. That would be a public recognition of UK sovereignty and although



in accordance with the facts of the constitutional position unlikely to be attractive to the Irish. Nor would it in itself recognise any Irish concern different in kind from that of other countries who have Consular representation in Northern Ireland. They would need for their own internal political purposes something more distinctive.

30. From our point of view, frequent and regular consultation between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Irish Ministers would be a desirable arrangement. But the Irish might reasonably ask for something more institutionalised - like a resident representative or Commissioner who might be a member of their Government or a senior Government servant, perhaps appointed for the purpose.

31. The remit of such a representative or Commissioner would need careful negotiation but the Irish may well want to keep responsibility for most things in the hands of their Ministers. Nevertheless there are policy questions about language, broadcasting, etc. which could be considered jointly by the Commissioner and the Secretary of State. The Irish would find it difficult to accept that in the last resort the Secretary of State had the power of decision, but, e.g. a third party arbiter makes no sense. It might be a solution that any disagreement should be referred to a summit meeting under the AIIC.

32. But such questions of policy would not occupy all the time of a Commissioner. We could consider whether it should be agreed that he should be the authorised recipient of complaints from individuals which he could at his discretion press upon the Secretary of State either directly or - e.g. as regards security - via the Irish Minister of Justice. Whether he should so act in the area of devolved administration is more doubtful. It could be disruptive of what is likely to be a fragile organisation.



Summary

33. The general line of argument in this paper is that an Irish willingness to work to amend Articles 2 and 3 of their Constitution in exchange for an Irish political involvement in Northern Ireland opens up new and encouraging possibilities; that as regards security we should proceed carefully and gradually while not ruling out moves towards joint policing; that a local devolved administration would greatly and desirably limit the scope for Irish involvement and that without it responsibility shared between London and Dublin is unlikely to be tolerated by the Unionists; and that given a devolved administration, there are subjects particularly sensitive for Nationalists in which shared responsibility between HMG and Dublin would be practicable.

7 June 1984



REPARTITION

1. The most respected analysis of the possibilities of re-drawing the boundary of Northern Ireland was made by Dr Paul Compton of Queen's University, Belfast. Dr Compton started with the proposition that the partition of 1920 was necessary and justified but was flawed by the messy way in which it was executed. He argues that a prime cause of the present difficulties in Northern Ireland was its "over-bounding" and that closer regard should have been paid to the geographical distribution of Catholics and Protestants.

2. He therefore examined sympathetically the scope for re-drawing the boundary now in a way which would produce a more homogeneous population in Northern Ireland. He used 1971 census figures and examined distribution by religion in District Council and Ward areas, though recognising that not all Catholics favour Irish unity.

3. He found that the current population distribution in Northern Ireland is even more intermingled than at the time of partition. Even where the Catholics are a majority there tends to be a substantial Protestant minority. For example, in only one of the twenty-six Northern Ireland District Councils do Catholics comprise more than 70% of the total population. Even looking at smaller units the areas of clear Catholic dominance are small and scattered. Although some wards with large Catholic majorities are close to the border, others are quite distant from the Republic. And around one third of the total Catholic population live in Belfast, representing a quarter of the City's population.

4. Dr Compton accepted that such intermingling ruled out a simple realignment separating Roman Catholics from Protestants altogether but went on to examine the scope for re-drawing the boundary in a way which would achieve significant reduction in the size of the minority. He proposed three



?? possible boundary revisions which are illustrated in the maps attached. Version A is the most radical reduction in the size of Northern Ireland. It would leave a population of just over a million, of whom 73.5% would be Protestant and 26.5% Roman Catholics (though the voting age majority would be larger). Version A would however involve ceding more than half the present area of Northern Ireland to the Republic. Version B would leave a total population of 1,200,000 with 70.6% Protestant and 28.4% Catholic. As such a radical re-drawing of the boundary could well stimulate some voluntary movement of population, the Protestant majority under both Version B and Version A could turn out larger. In the ceded area under Version A there are 300,000 Catholic and 200,000 Protestant inhabitants and in Version B 250,000 Catholics and 125,000 Protestants.

5. Version C represents a much more modest adjustment to the boundary, designed to minimise the number of Protestants living in the areas to be ceded. The effect of these smaller changes would be to reduce the size of the Catholic minority by 105,000 to around 460,000 (1971 values) while transferring only 30,000 Protestants. Even such comparatively minor changes involve ceding most of the City of Derry to the Republic.

6. Dr Compton notes the importance of Belfast but does not examine the possibility of dividing the city in the style of Berlin with perhaps a corridor and a wall. The population distribution within Belfast has many of the problems of scatter and intermingling of Northern Ireland as a whole. The attached map gives a broad illustration. Accordingly one might define a wedge-shaped area in West Belfast (running from Twinbrook to the Divis Flats, incorporating Poleglass, Lenadoon, Suffolk, Ladybrook, Riverdale, Andersonstown, Turf Lodge, New Barnsley, Ballymurphy, White Rock, Beechmount, Springfield, Clonard, Distillery and the Lower Falls). It would have a total population of 70,000, all but 7,000 of



whom would be Catholics. It would include more than half the Catholic population of Belfast and just under a quarter of the total population of Belfast. The heartlands of Loyalist paramilitarism adjoin the area but only one significant Protestant enclave (Blacks Road) is within it. Catholic working class areas outside include the Ardoyne, Legoniel, Newlodge, Cliftonville, Markets and Short Strand.

7. Some of the arguments which have been used against re-drawing the boundary may be of doubtful validity. The argument that a smaller Northern Ireland would be less viable is particularly dubious. Experience in recent decades has shown that units which may seem absurdly small in economic or geographic terms can sustain independence if the population is sufficiently determined. The areas to be ceded are even less prosperous than the rest of Northern Ireland and their loss would not worsen Northern Ireland's dependence on the rest of the UK economically. The argument that repartition on religious criteria implies abandoning hope of the two communities living together has more force. Experience of the last two decades has however done much to justify such pessimism. If Sinn Fein replace the SDLP, the minority community can be regarded as having expressed themselves to be irreconcilable and committed to support for violence.

8. There are, however, more powerful arguments against re-drawing the boundary. First it would unstick the 1922 Settlement. The current border has the authority which springs from lasting over half a century. It has international recognition, including practical recognition by the Republic despite its constitution. To abandon it would meet a prime aim of the IRA. The Government of the Republic would recognise the purpose of re-drawing the boundary as creating an indefinitely secure Protestant majority for Northern Ireland and would oppose it accordingly. While it could not refuse to take in people whom it regards as its own, it might well refuse to recognise the new boundaries and win international support for the view that the change has thrown the status of Northern



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Ireland as part of the United Kingdom into the melting pot. Instability would be worrying to Unionists especially if opposition parties here did not support the new boundaries. While they might welcome the benefits of a more homogeneous population they might feel that the gain was outweighed by the uncertainties and the loss of territory. The extensive surrender of territory in Versions A and B would be regarded as betrayal and could well lead to a violent Unionist reaction; and the surrender of a lot of Derry in Version C would not be taken calmly. Financial compensation would need to be offered to Unionists whose land or homes were to be ceded. (They tend to have the better land.) In theory the unoccupied land and houses could be sold to nationalists, but a boycott would be in accordance with nationalist tradition. Exchanges of population would need time to arrange, if they were practicable at all, but a long interval between announcing a decision to abandon territory and implementing the decision would enable political opposition to grow. Once the territory had been ceded we would lose all control over who lived there.

9. A negative attitude by the Republic would accentuate the difficulties over the Belfast sector, which is currently dominated by Sinn Fein. Withdrawal by the security forces would leave a safe base for conducting terrorism in the rest of Belfast and Northern Ireland; a walled ghetto would entail physical as well as political difficulties. Policing international boundaries across Belfast and any corridor between Republican Belfast and the border would be a formidable task.

10. The disadvantages might seem less overwhelming if the result of repartition were a substantially homeogeneous population. The disappointment of Dr Compton's analysis is that, however one draws the lines, one has to give up large areas of territory to achieve small gains in homogeneity. One may have to look at encouraging emigration of Catholics as well as, or instead of, re-drawing the boundary if the objective is to achieve a homogeneous Protestant/Unionist population in



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Northern Ireland. It is tempting to argue that people whose Republican views make it impossible for them to accept the Government of Northern Ireland should go and live in the Republic. Whereas moving half a million people might be the obvious solution for a totalitarian regime, we face problems as regards the spirit and letter of human rights provisions and international opinion. A loyalty test for the payment of Social Security benefits, deprivation of citizenship and deportation of Republican terrorists and their sympathizers and internment on a substantial scale should drive out large numbers. But the outcry at home as well as abroad would be enormous. One fears that lesser measures, such as financial inducements alone, would cost a lot without achieving a great deal.

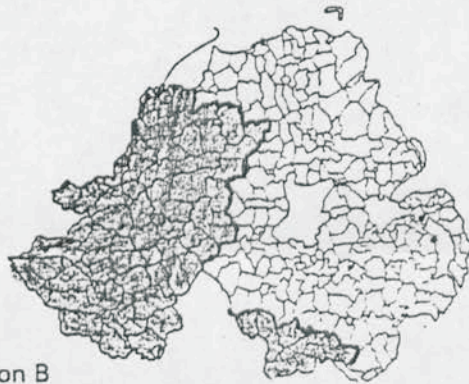
Northern Ireland Office  
6 June 1984




SECRET



Version A



Version B

 Areas to be ceded to the Irish Republic



Version C

SECRET





Catholic areas  
in Belfast.



Catholic areas  
adjoining Belfast  
County Borough.




SECRET



Version A



Version B

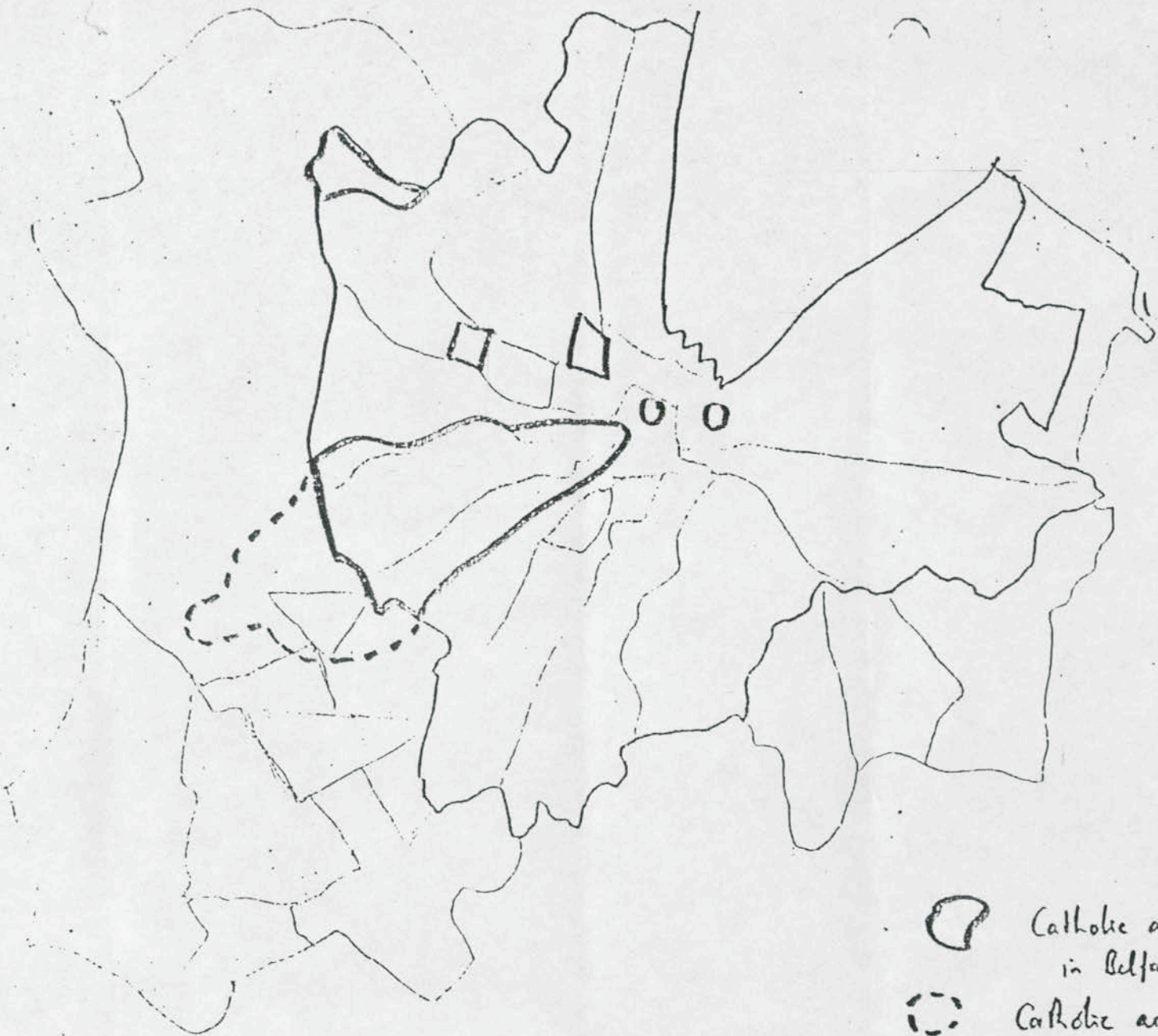
 Areas to be ceded to the Irish Republic



Version C

SECRET





Catholic areas  
in Belfast.



Catholic areas  
adjoining Belfast  
County Borough.



Inland Swatara A 16