



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

*I have spoken
to Mr. Kilfedder
who insists that
he does not
want a formal
reply. So please suspend.*

10th April 1986

CDP 1074.

Dear Charles,

Thank you for your letter of 26 March in which you requested a draft reply to Mr James Kilfedder's letter of 26 March to the Prime Minister.

Mr Kilfedder suggests that The Queen might be invited to call a conference on devolved government for Northern Ireland. He recalls that in 1914 King George V summoned Irish political leaders and the Government to a conference at Buckingham Palace. The King did indeed bring together the leaders of all the British and Irish parties to discuss an amending Bill, dealing separately with Ulster, to the Home Rule Bill. Although he was instrumental in setting up the conference, he did not take part in it himself. He had already been brought personally into the dispute by calls that he should dismiss the Liberal Government. There had been a near mutiny at the Curragh and both unionists and nationalists were openly arming themselves. However, the conference failed to achieve agreement.

It would be a mistake to compare circumstances then and now in reply to Mr Kilfedder. But in 1914 they were fundamentally different. The King was already involved and the matter seriously divided the two main parties at Westminster. There was also a threatening international situation. Mr Kilfedder's suggestion, on the other hand, would bring Her Majesty, for the first time into the politics of devolution and the Anglo-Irish Agreement. It would be wholly undesirable to associate The Queen with such a politically controversial issue in breach of the convention that she stands apart from political activity. Thus the draft reply to Mr Kilfedder rejects his idea, but acknowledges the helpful motive - that is his desire to find a way of encouraging the Ulster Unionist and Democratic Unionist Parties to start talking about their concerns with the Government.

*Yours Sincerely
Neil Ward*

N D WARD

DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER.....

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
James Kilfedder MP House of Commons LONDON SW1A 0AA (Full Postal Address)		 (Full Address, if Necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY THE PRIME MINISTER
(Name of Signatory)

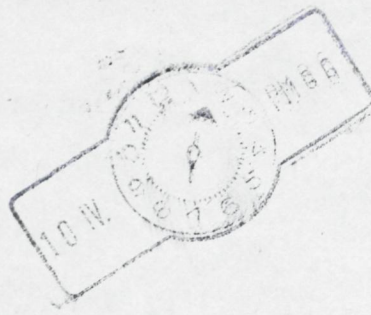
Thank you for your letter of 26 March.

As you will know I wrote to Jim Molyneaux and Ian Paisley on 21 March in reply to their letter of 7 March. Ian Paisley subsequently released that letter and I am sure you will have read what I said.

I appreciate your motives in suggesting that Her Majesty might summon a conference to discuss devolution. But it would be wrong, whatever the precedents of 1914, when circumstances were very different, to involve The Queen in such a delicate and contentious political matter. There are differences between the Government and Northern Ireland political parties. There is great affection and respect for Her Majesty in Northern Ireland, and I would not wish to cloud or confuse those feelings by associating Her Majesty with political controversy. I hope therefore that on reflection you will decide not to float this

/...

idea publicly. But I am grateful to you for seeking to find ways of encouraging the leaders of the Official Unionist and Democratic Unionist Parties to take the constructive path of discussion.



IRELAND Relations PT13



Charles

CRB/14

J. KILFEDDER, MP.

at flap

He wrote to PM

5-10 days ago & received
an acknowledgement.

He doesn't want a
formal reply but would
appreciate an informal
reply from you on the
'phone.

He's at his London
Flat, you may call him
either tonight or
tomorrow.

405 6226

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CRP telephoned
20.00 9/4/86

Julie

9.4.86



B(2A)(11)

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

ack

26 March 1986

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Mr. Kilfedder, received late this evening.

I should be grateful for a draft reply.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Colin Budd (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

||

Col telephoned Mr Kilfedder on 9.4.86 - no need for written reply.

(C.D. Powell)

C/F
For yr to b/F

Jim Daniell, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office

PA

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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

CCPCAV
Prime Minister. (2)
A curious idea.
CDP
26/3

26 March 1986

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear Prime Minister

This would be highly
embarrassing for the Queen.
I hope the IC will not
pursue it. The situation
did not exactly improve after
the previous conference!

In the midst of our present difficulties we have to look for fresh means of opening up discussions, which we both agree are essential for progress.

I have been turning the problem over in my mind.

It is quite clear that the Leaders of the Official Unionist and Democratic Unionist Parties cannot enter into further talks without the "suspension" of the London-Dublin Agreement, and you have stated publicly - and to me privately - that you cannot suspend the Agreement or arrange for a respite in its operation.

Since there is a deadlock, which may soon lead to a dangerous situation for the two communities in the Province, may I suggest to you a formula for attempting to resolve the crisis.

In 1914 King George V summoned the Leaders of the Irish political parties and HMG to a Conference at Buckingham Palace to discuss the grave situation which had arisen over the Home Rule Bill. The King welcomed the representatives and then left them to try to find a settlement under the Chairmanship of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

I am prepared to test the reaction of the Official Unionist Party and Democratic Unionist Party and the Ulster people in general by a public announcement of my intention to write to Her Majesty - or that I had written - asking her to call such a Conference on devolved Government for Northern Ireland.

I believe that my intervention could be helpful, but I appreciate that the Queen can only act on your advice.

I am fearful of embarrassing Her Majesty by making such an announcement before she has an opportunity of considering that advice, and I would not proceed with such an appeal to the Monarch without knowing that she would not be embarrassed.

/I am

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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

26 March 1986

I am making this suggestion on my own initiative, and if I wrote to Her Majesty it would be either as Leader of the Ulster Popular Unionist Party or as the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Yours sincerely
Jim Kilfedder

JAMES KILFEDDER MP

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