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HEAD OF THE N.I.
23 APR 1986

PS/Secretary of State (L)

cc	PS/SofS (B)	M
	PS/Mr Scott (L)	M
	Mr Bloomfield	M
	Mr Brennan	
	Mr Chesterton	
	Mr M Elliott	M
	Miss Elliott	
	Mr Bell	
	PS/PUS (B)	M

RECEIVED
1455
23 APR 1986
STORMONT HOUSE ANNEX

ARTICLES 2 and 3 OF IRISH CONSTITUTION

At the end of yesterday's meeting of the Armstrong/Nally group I mentioned the Secretary of State's recent discussion with Mr Lillis in which he had urged the desirability of the Irish Government amending Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution. Mr Lillis had undertaken to report to Dublin and I wondered whether there was yet any response.

2. Mr Nally and Mr Donlon said that, following Mr Lillis' report, the matter had been submitted to the Taoiseach who had emphatically rejected the suggestion. The subject had been discussed at length during the Anglo-Irish negotiations, when there had at one time been the possibility of movement as part of a wider Anglo-Irish Agreement; but there was no longer a political context in which to consider such a radical and controversial step. The political situation was not right. The Government would have enough difficulty in handling the referendum on divorce; and there could be no question of embarking on another referendum this side of a general election.

3. Mr Brennan and I pointed out that the situation had changed since the negotiation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and that the need to take some step to reduce Unionist hostility provided a political context. But Mr Nally said that the Taoiseach was adamant: "the file is closed".

RA

23 April 1986

R J ANDREW

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