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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 November 1981

Dear Michael,

ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT : POSSIBLE STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

There will be considerable Parliamentary interest in Friday's Anglo-Irish Summit. We have been considering how this might best be dealt with, and in particular whether to advise that the Prime Minister should make a statement to the House of Commons.

In the past, statements have not been made after bilateral summits with Community partners and there is clearly a danger that to make a statement after any particular summit would elevate it in an undesirable way.

That being said, you may recall that after the Dublin Summit in December last year there was widespread feeling in the House of Commons that the Prime Minister should have made a statement. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the Communiqué described discussions as 'extremely constructive and significant' and argued that any extremely constructive, fresh and significant decisions on such matters should be reported to the House of Commons. Some MPs may draw attention to the commitment that the Prime Minister made in a written reply to a question from Mr Michael Brown on 25 March that 'If (the Joint Studies) led the two Governments to make recommendations on matters of policy, they would of course place them before their respective Parliaments in the normal way.'. Moreover, on this occasion it seems likely that the decision will be taken to publish not only the Report of the Steering Group to the Prime Minister but also four out of the five Joint Studies. The Lord Privy Seal has vivid recollections of the

/anxieties

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anxieties and doubts expressed by normally quite sensible people in Northern Ireland following the absence of a statement last December.

In all the circumstances, the Lord Privy Seal thinks that the balance of advantage lies with the Prime Minister making a statement. The publication of the Report and the Joint Studies in connection with the summit make the summit sufficiently different to avoid the statement becoming an unwelcome precedent. The statement could be short and draw very largely on the Communiqué. It need not say anything of substance that would not be said in reply to Parliamentary Questions. I enclose a possible first draft.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stephen Boys-Smith (Northern Ireland), Julian West (Energy), David Heyhoe (Leader of the House of Commons), Murdo Maclean (Government Whip's Office) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Adam

A K C Wood
Assistant Private Secretary
to the Lord Privy Seal



DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

I should like, with permission, Mr Speaker, to make a statement on the discussions that I held with the Taoiseach on 6 November.

This was a regular meeting in the series that we hold with the Irish Government on a similar basis to those that we hold with the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Italy.

Right Honourable and Honourable Members will wish to know that this was a successful meeting and that decisions were taken at it that gave it a particular significance. I thought therefore that it would be appropriate, on this occasion, to make a statement.

Dr FitzGerald and I discussed a number of international questions and a range of EC issues. We also gave attention to carrying forward the commitment that I entered into with his predecessor to move to closer relations between our two countries. We found that our minds were close on the benefits that closer relations could have for all the peoples of both countries. We agreed that it was wrong that those who committed crimes in one country should be able to escape prosecution and conviction by seeking refuge in the other and we agreed that urgent consideration should be given to how this could best be achieved, given the constitutional and political realities in both countries.

