



2 PPS.

Prime Minister Ireland

Ref. A03674

MR. ALEXANDER

European Council, Luxembourg: Northern Ireland

We have heard from the Northern Ireland Office that the Irish Prime Minister, Mr. Charles Haughey, is anxious to have a few minutes' discussion with the Prime Minister about Northern Ireland in the margins of the Council. If Mr. Haughey should take such an initiative, the Prime Minister will no doubt wish to hear what he has to say (Mr. Haughey may want to give a preliminary indication of how he sees the Dublin talks going) but she should not enter into substantial discussion. The Prime Minister could, if necessary, take the following line:

"I am much looking forward to our meeting in Dublin next week (8th December). This opportunity to exchange views is extremely important. I shall want to give close attention to any ideas you may have. We shall be meeting against a background of rather heightened tension in view of the prisoners' hunger strike. As you know, we have set our faces firmly against any concessions leading to what the protesters could describe as political status. Nevertheless, we are trying to maintain a caring and humanitarian regime in the prisons, and we shall not be deflected from that".

2. I am copying this minute to Roy Harrington (NIO) and to George Walden (FCO).

D. J. WRIGHT

27th November, 1980