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PRIME MINISTER

With officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Northern Ireland Office and the Cabinet Office, I visited Dublin on Wednesday, 14th October to complete the work on the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies, with a view to reporting to you and the Taoiseach for your meeting on 6th November.

2. Before the meeting of officials, I was taken immediately upon my arrival in Dublin to see the Taoiseach.

3. The Taoiseach said that he was much looking forward to his meeting with you. He recalled earlier meetings with you when you were both in different positions (in particular one when he thought that he might have wrecked Anglo-Irish relations: you and he were on a boat, not under cover, the conditions were not particularly good, and you were minded to go into the cabin, but Dr. Fitzgerald persuaded you not to do so, and you were almost immediately drenched by a passing wave). The first objective of next month's meeting would be to establish a relationship between himself and you, though he hoped that the meeting would be successful in substantive terms as well. On the Irish side public references to the meeting in advance would be low key, in order not to arouse expectations; if the meeting had a good outcome, the public effect of that would be the more welcome for not having been anticipated. I indicated that our presentation would also be low key.

4. The Taoiseach said that, when the Dail resumed on Tuesday, 20th October, he would certainly be asked whether he had any plans to meet you. He would prefer not to prevaricate about this, though obviously he would not wish to announce a date until much nearer the time. Such visits were usually announced simultaneously in the two capitals, and he would prefer that this pattern should be followed on this occasion. He envisaged an announcement on Monday, 19th October (or at the latest) the morning of Tuesday, 20th October, to be made simultaneously in London and Dublin, to the effect that the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach had agreed to hold the next in the series of regular Anglo-Irish bilaterals within the next few weeks, and that the

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Prime Minister had invited the Taoiseach to visit London accompanied by appropriate colleagues. I said that I would pursue this with Mr. Nally. I should be grateful for authority to propose to him an announcement as in the draft attached (Annex A); if you agree, I will propose to Mr. Nally that it should be issued on Tuesday, 20th October at 11.30 am.

Agree? Yes
A

5. As to the form of the meeting, the Taoiseach's ideas were very much in line with our own. We envisaged a period before lunch, when you and he would meet without other Ministers; a working lunch, to consist mainly of Ministers but with the two Ambassadors and possibly two officials (one on each side); and a plenary meeting after lunch. As to the Taoiseach's meeting with you we envisaged a short time at the outset when you would be completely on your own (Dr. Fitzgerald thought about ten minutes, but clearly it could be as long as you both wanted when the time came), after which you would be joined by one official each. If it was thought convenient, because you were discussing the Joint Studies, I think we could extend this, so that Mr. Nally and I were present as well as Mr. Alexander and his Irish counterpart as note-takers.

Agree B
These arrangements?
* Should prefer a note-taker present. Yes.
Otherwise not

6. For agenda, we agreed that it would consist of:-

- (1) Anglo-Irish Joint Studies
- (2) Northern Ireland
- (3) Other Bilateral Issues
- (4) European Community Matters
- (5) Any Other Business (including any discussion of world political issues)

I formed the impression that the Taoiseach was not particularly anxious to spend much time on Community matters with you, and I suggested that these could well be discussed between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Irish Foreign Minister at a meeting of their own before lunch, on which they could report at the plenary meeting after lunch.

Agree C
Yes

7. The Taoiseach said that he proposed to be accompanied by the Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party), Mr. O'Leary, and by the Foreign Minister, Dr. Dooge, who should by then have been confirmed in office. I said that I thought that you would be accompanied by the Foreign and

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Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach said that Mr. O'Leary was also Minister for Industry and Energy; energy matters would feature significantly in the bilateral issues (in particular the two electricity "interconnectors") and he was sure that Mr. O'Leary would wish to see the Secretary of State for Energy. I said that I thought that you would be very happy to add the Secretary of State for Energy to the British representation, even though it would mean that the British had one more Minister than the Irish. We discussed briefly whether other Ministers should take part in the consultation, as had happened in Dublin in December 1980; but we came to the conclusion that there was no particular case for that on this occasion.

Agree?
Yes

8. The Taoiseach said that he very much hoped that it would be possible for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to visit Dublin before he himself came to London. Although formally it would be a visit to the Foreign Minister, in practice he would want to see Mr. Prior himself. He thought that such a meeting was virtually indispensable, and might make all the difference to the success of his meeting with you. He urged very strongly that a visit by Mr. Prior to Dublin should be arranged before 6th November. I said that I knew that the Secretary of State was considering this very carefully. He had hoped that he might be able to meet Dr. Dooge when he was in London for meetings earlier this week; that had not in the event been possible, and in any case I realised that it was not a substitute for a visit to Dublin at which Mr. Prior would meet the Taoiseach. I thought that the only consideration which might incline the Secretary of State against such a visit would be the reactions of the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. He was already thought to have leant too far in the direction of the Republicans in his response to the end of the hunger strike; he would not want to put himself into a position where the Protestants would say that he was going to Dublin to receive his marching orders. I knew that he was thinking seriously about the idea of a visit to Dublin and I would make sure that both he and you were aware of what the Taoiseach had said to me.

I incline to think it would be very dangerous for Mr. Prior to go to Dublin ahead of the meeting - especially in view of the attacks - bombing in London.

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9. Our conversation then turned to the subject of the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies, and first to the question of publication. The Taoiseach said that he knew that it had been agreed between you and his predecessor that these studies should be completely confidential, and he understood the reasons for that; but the secrecy round the studies had aroused great suspicions in Mr. Paisley and the Unionists in Northern Ireland. I said that the proposals which officials would be putting to him and you would provide for a fairly full summary of the reports of the Joint Studies, which would be intended for publication as an annex to the communique of their meeting. The Taoiseach feared that this would not completely allay suspicions in the North: it was clear from the summary (the draft of which he had seen) that there were other documents behind it (the five individual reports), and the Unionists would suspect that there were "sell outs" in the reports which were not included in the summary. In his view it was for consideration whether not only the summary but the reports themselves should be published. I said that the reports had not been written with a view to publication, and I thought that, if there was any question of their being published, both the Irish and British Governments would need to review them with great care with an eye to publication. Mr. Nally commented that the reports included material provided by a number of Departments on the understanding that the reports would not be for publication; those Departments would have to be consulted. I suggested that an alternative might be to modify the summary so that it became a self-contained report of the Joint Studies, and did not contain references to study groups. It was left that further consideration would have to be given to these alternatives and the decision would eventually be for you and the Taoiseach to make when you met. It was also clear to me that the idea of publication of the individual reports was very much the Taoiseach's own; his officials would very much prefer not to publish them. They will so advise, and they made no secret of their hope that you would be against publishing the reports and would support the alternative suggestion of making the summary a self-contained report of the Joint Studies for publication.

Mued ✓

*E
We would be under great pressure to do so if we would advise with them in regard.*

10. In parenthesis I should add that we have, with the Irish, converted the summary into a self-contained report: I attach a copy herewith (Annex B). We shall also be looking through the individual reports to see what changes would be needed to make them fit for publication; but we advise against it.

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11. The Taoiseach made it clear that he would be urging you to agree with his view that a Parliamentary counterpart of the proposed inter-governmental Anglo-Irish Co-operation Council should be instituted in parallel with the inter-governmental Council. This view is, of course, reflected in the relevant study report. The Taoiseach attaches importance to this because the inter-governmental Council is in a sense only a rationalisation and co-ordination of existing contacts - though it may in time lead to more. The Taoiseach sees the Parliamentary counterpart as being the only forum in which representatives of Northern Ireland can be effectively brought into the process. I said that it was not wholly easy to see how this would in effect be done, given that there was at present no elected assembly in Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach took the point, but said that it would be necessary to find some way round it; perhaps by some process of nominating Members of the former convention which he believed was in suspense but had not been formally abolished. I said that this was clearly something which he would have to discuss with you when you met. I thought that the British Government's position was that it would be better to proceed by stages, starting with the inter-governmental Council and progressing to a Parliamentary grouping, which would be wider than the existing Anglo/Irish Parliamentary Group once the inter-governmental Council had got under way. There remained a number of political difficulties to resolve about a Parliamentary group which went wider than the Parliaments in London and Dublin: problems of sponsorship, choice of representatives, and organisation. We can clearly expect the Taoiseach to press this issue when he comes to see you.

12. The Taoiseach then referred to his recent initiatives for amending the Irish Constitution so as to take out the "constitutional claim" to the six counties and to liberalise the provisions on such matters as divorce. He said that he had launched this initiative on the radio because it was necessary to make an impact on the people at large in a way in which a speech in the Dail or Senate could hardly do. It could be argued that he had not got the presentation quite right in his radio interview, partly because he was responding to questions rather than making a considered statement. But he clearly felt that his second bite at the cherry, in his speech in the Senate, which was a considered statement, had

Study we already have on Anglo-Irish Parliamentary group in the U.K. F. Parliament? Is there one in Dublin? Any group would have to consider P.S.

NO

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been a better statement of his position. He said that these statements had started a process which would go on for a long time. Mr. Haughey's reactions had been predictably intransigent, but not all Members of Fianna Fail thought as Mr. Haughey did. In particular, the reaction of Mr. Owen Ryan, the leader of the Opposition in the Senate, had been much more moderate. Mr. Ryan was an old friend of the Taoiseach and the Taoiseach knew that Mr. Ryan privately agreed with most of what he was saying, though naturally he could not go as far as this in public. There were others who thought like Mr. Ryan, and in his speech in the Senate the Taoiseach had been able to refer with good effect to statements by previous Taoiseachs, including Mr. De Valera, about the eventual need to reform the Constitution on the lines he was now suggesting. Reactions from the country suggested that there was a good deal of support for what the Taoiseach was saying from middle class people but, predictably at this stage, much less from working class people who were traditionally hard-line Republicans.

13. I said, speaking personally, that I thought that the Taoiseach's initiative was very much in line with your own thinking that, if there was to be any rapprochement between North and South, it could only come as a result of the Republic wooing the Protestants in the North and taking measures which would bring them to accept that their way of life, their beliefs and their freedoms would not be at risk in a closer link with the South. You might well feel, however, that it would not be helpful to the Taoiseach that you should publicly commend the initiative in public: that might be the kiss of death.

14. The Taoiseach said that, however that might be, prospects for his initiative in the coming months would be greatly improved if his meeting with you was a success. He very much hoped that you would be able to respond to his initiative. He suggested that your response might take the form of some re-statement of the British guarantee to Northern Ireland in a more positive form. He was not calling in question the principle that the unification of Ireland could come about only with the consent of the people of Northern Ireland; indeed he claimed that he himself introduced the term "consent" in 1969. But he said that the British Government always expressed the guarantee in negative form: that there would be no change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland

I said something about it on the radio.
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without the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland. Only in 1973 had this been expressed more positively, to the effect that the British Government would support a change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland if the people of Northern Ireland themselves wished it. It would greatly improve the prospects for his initiative if at your meeting with him you were able to agree a formulation which repeated that the British Government would support a constitutional change if the people of Northern Ireland themselves wished it, and that the British Government would be happy to see the two parts of Ireland working more closely together with a view to creating a closer relationship.

H 15. I said that I would report what the Taoiseach had said faithfully to you and your colleagues. Speaking personally, I could not see why there need be any objection in principle to a repetition of the formula used in 1973; the main question would be whether it was politically expedient to repeat it at this time, and that would be for Ministers to decide. I did not comment on the "happy to see" part of the Taoiseach's formulation, and the Taoiseach obviously noticed that I had not done so, because he stressed once again that he would like to see a statement which included both parts of his formulation - "would support change if the people of Northern Ireland wished it" and "would be happy to see the two parts of Ireland working closer together" - in whatever words seemed appropriate.

16. In my subsequent negotiation with Mr. Nally about the Joint Studies I was able to reach satisfactory agreement on all five reports and on the draft summary for publication, except on one point. This is the title of the proposed inter-governmental structure. ^{No} Three alternatives for this remain on the tables: "Anglo-Irish Council", which the Irish want but I have rejected; "Anglo-Irish Co-operation Council", which we could wear but the Irish rejected (they were not to be tempted at this stage by "Council for Anglo-Irish Co-operation", though they recognised that it might re-emerge at your meeting with the Taoiseach), and ^{No} "Anglo-Irish Standing Conference", which the Irish tentatively canvassed and I said we could probably accept. I think that Standing Conference would in fact suit us well, since it avoids altogether the word Council with its Sunningdale overtones. ^{Agree? I} If you agree, I will make a further attempt to settle for "Anglo-Irish Standing Conference"; the Irish might be willing to settle for this, rather than leave this as an issue which had to be sorted out by you and the Taoiseach when you meet. ^{NO}

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17. On the passage in the summary which mentions the "guarantee" and was the subject of Mr. Rickett's minute to Mr. Wright of 12th October, we were able after something of a struggle to agree on the following which I think fully safeguards the point you had in mind: -

"As between Northern Ireland and the South the problem went deeper. In this context the issues which were relevant were the "constitutional claim" and the "guarantee"; and Church/State relationships. Action to reduce misunderstanding of these matters would clearly be needed."

18. The five reports and the summary, as now agreed with the Irish, will be circulated in the OD(AI) series as soon as a number of editorial points have been tidied up. As I said in paragraph 10, the summary has been recast as a self-contained document which does not suggest the existence of five other documents. It now formally constitutes Mr. Nally's and my report to you and the Taoiseach on the outcome of the Studies which you and his predecessor commissioned at Dublin Castle last December; and (as previously envisaged) it could (if you and Dr. Fitzgerald agree) serve as an annex to be attached to the communique published about the consultation on 6th November.

J

19. I think that this will resolve the question whether or not the five Studies themselves should also be published. The Taoiseach accepts that they could not be published without your agreement. His officials made no secret of their view that publication would not be desirable. I told Mr. Nally that in my view you were unlikely to agree to publish the Studies, as opposed to the summary. Mr. Nally replied that he thought Dr. Fitzgerald would accept that. Hence the importance of revising the summary (as we have done) to eliminate any suggestion that other documents exist but are being suppressed.

*Don't feel
I don't
wants
publish
but
you will
negotiate
will be up
it in detail*

20. Mr. Nally and I agreed that the existing Anglo-Irish machinery should be kept in being to consider post-Summit follow-up action in the areas covered by the Studies. He and I will meet soon after 6th November to take stock. In that context I have given him a check list of action points which arise if the outcome of the Studies is approved at the Summit. This, too, is being circulated in the OD(AI) series; and I attach a copy herewith (Annex C).

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21. Mr. Nally and I also agreed that there should be a pre-Summit meeting of United Kingdom (including Northern Irish) and Irish officials at the end of October to give preliminary consideration to the possible wording for the Summit communique. I am in touch with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Northern Ireland Office about this.

Am very doubtful about it - then

22. There is one question about the arrangements for the Summit meeting on 6th November which we have not discussed with the Irish, because we need to take your views. That is the question whether there should be a joint Press Conference by you and the Taoiseach, separate Press Conferences or no Press Conference at all at the end of the visit. At the end of the Dublin Summit in December 1980, you did not give a Press Conference but the then Taoiseach did. I think we can take it for granted that, even if we agreed with the Irish that there would be no Press Conference at the end of the visit, Dr. Fitzgerald would certainly talk to his Press as soon as he got back to Dublin. He is (as you know) an articulate, not to say voluble, talker, and, particularly if he thinks the meeting has been a success, he may run away with himself at a subsequent Press Conference. I believe that there would be something to be said for agreeing to a joint Press Conference, at which you would at least be able to hear what he was saying, and to correct on the spot any misapprehensions or misunderstandings to which his observations might otherwise give rise. The question whether there should be a Press Conference and what form it should take is one we should need to discuss with the Irish before the visit takes place, and I should be grateful for instructions.

I should prefer a joint press conference or none at all

K

23. I am sending copies of this minute to the Home Secretary, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Lord President, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Lord Privy Seal and the Attorney General.

Robert Armstrong

16th October 1981