

Copied to Luxembourg admin file.

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

①
Prime Minister

Apce to a one
Say visit?

7 November 1980

Paul, xi

Would he prefer
to delay the visit
or to have a longer
meeting at
Luxembourg?
not.

Dear Michael,

Prime Minister's Visit to Dublin

Dermot Nally, Secretary of the Irish Government, told British officials yesterday that the Taoiseach had reluctantly come to the conclusion that it might be better, given the emotional pressures likely to be building up over the H-Block hunger strike, if the Prime Minister did not after all stay overnight in Dublin on 8/9 December. He wondered therefore whether it would seriously inconvenience the Prime Minister to come to Dublin rather earlier on 8 December, ie: in time for a working lunch. Talks would take place during the afternoon, and the Prime Minister would be able to return in the early evening. Nally made it clear that the Taoiseach's principal concern was that the Prime Minister should not be exposed to hostile demonstrations. The risks would obviously be much reduced if there were no advance leak of the visit, but an overnight stop would give the "opposition" time to mobilize.

Getting to Dublin by lunch time would mean leaving central London at about 10.00 am. Would the Prime Minister's timetable allow this? If so it would clearly be sensible to fall in with the Irish proposal. If not, we might offer the Taoiseach the option of a meeting in the margins of the European Council in Luxembourg. Nally said that the Taoiseach would in any event hope to have 15 minutes with the Prime Minister in Luxembourg; he will no doubt contact you about this on arrival.

Nally expressly asked that we convey to the Prime Minister the Taoiseach's grave concern over the likely impact of the Maze hunger strike, not only in the Republic but also in Northern Ireland. If the Prime Minister felt there were any way in which the Taoiseach could help, she had only to ask.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Roy Harrington in the Northern Ireland Office.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)

Private Secretary

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