

cc. PRESS

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 November 1980

Dear Michael,

The Prime Minister's visit to Dublin

In your letter of 31 October to Roy Harrington you recorded the Prime Minister as saying that if developments at the Maze prison made a visit to Dublin inadvisable, she would be content to meet Mr Haughey in the margins of the European Council Meeting in Luxembourg. We shall of course say this if the Irish raise the matter in terms which suggest that Mr Haughey himself has decided that it would be better to postpone the visit.

So far of course we have no reason to suppose that he has reached such a decision; if he were to do so it would be with considerable reluctance, not least because it would be seen as a PIRA victory. It seems to us important therefore that nothing be said in London which would convey the impression that the Prime Minister herself has doubts about going to Dublin in present circumstances. There has already been speculation in one Dublin newspaper that the visit might be called off, and we may be asked to comment. We propose, if you agree, that News Department should say no more than that arrangements for the next meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach are under discussion between the two Governments; that we have no reason to suppose that the hunger strike at the Maze will affect these arrangements; and that for self evident security reasons details will not be divulged until much nearer the time.

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

Yours etc

(P Lever)
Private Secretary

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