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cc: PS/SofS (L&B) -M  
PS/Ministers (L&B) -M  
PS/PUS (L&B) -M  
Mr Marshall  
Mr Blelloch -M  
Mr Angel  
Mr Wyatt -M  
Mr Buxton -M  
Mr Burns  
Mr Harrington  
Mr Chesterton  
Mr Blatherwick -M  
Mr Gilliland -M  
Miss Christopherson  
HM Ambassador, Dublin  
PS/Sir Robert Armstrong

NOTE OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE TAOISEACH, BARRETSTOWN CASTLE, CO KILDARE, 27 OCTOBER 1981

TETE A TETE BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE TAOISEACH

Present:

Secretary of State  
Mr S W Boys Smith

Dr Garret Fitzgerald TD,  
Taoiseach  
Mr Michael O'Leary TD,  
Tanaiste  
Mr Nally

Anglo-Irish Relations and Political Affairs in Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State outlined to the Taoiseach the way his mind had been moving on affairs in Northern Ireland. He had tried in his speech to the Conservative Party Conference to open up the question of more exchanges with the Republic, which he believed were important and should increasingly be seen as unexceptional. He was keen to prompt thought and discussion in Northern Ireland although the differences between committed people in both communities remained very great. He had tried to show to the majority on the one hand that the economic situation in the Province was very serious and that its improvement was being hindered by the lack of political progress; and he had also drawn their attention to the way in which people in Great Britain were less tolerant than they had been of the inability of the two communities to work together even though they remained firm in their support of the security forces and sympathetic about the effects of violence on Northern Ireland.

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He believed that the climate of opinion in Northern Ireland was changing and that messages of this kind were being understood. On the other hand he had, to give one example, reminded the SDLP of the difficulty of making progress towards the sort of scheme for a federal Ireland which they had outlined to him the preceding week and he had expressed his concern to them about the reaction if they sought to advance at too fast a rate.

For his part, the Secretary of State said his thinking was at an early stage. He did not personally believe that the total integration of Northern Ireland with Great Britain was a practicable way to move. Nor did he think that Stormont could be restored in the form in which it had existed until 1972. He also believed that direct rule could not be continued for the indefinite future. He could not at this stage however go further and indicate how political advance might be made.

In further discussion, and in response to questions from the Taoiseach and the Tanaiste, the Secretary of State said he had tried to draw to people's attention the association which existed between economic and political development in Northern Ireland. He would wish to give thought to such questions as the powers of district councils. At this stage he was sceptical about the practicability of power sharing and he pointed out that many in the majority believed it was they who had made all the concessions since 1972. He would like to see the emergence eventually of arrangements acceptable to both Governments which also met the aspirations and fears of both communities in the North. He believed that the development of links between London and Dublin were an important element. He was keen to do all he could to encourage close links and would like to see Belfast drawn in to give the relationship a Northern Ireland dimension. The development of Anglo-Irish relations could not however have a sudden or dramatic impact on affairs in the North: it was a question of slowly seeking to take things forward.

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The Taoiseach noted the Secretary of State's views. He believed that politics in Northern Ireland were atrophied at the moment. They were also unbalanced: on the minority side the SDLP was broadly moderate and was therefore exposed to being undermined by extremists. But a substantial element of the political representation of the majority was already extreme. He was anxious to help establish the kind of environment in Anglo-Irish relationships which would facilitate developments in the North, and also to foster these relationships for their own sake. Exchanges between the two countries should be seen in both these lights and he did not want them to be surrounded by needless secrecy.



The Taoiseach referred to a scheme he had evolved in 1978 for an assembly in Northern Ireland which would elect a Provincial Prime Minister by simple majority but in which the Government would have to command the support of some 80% of the members, although he was not wedded to that precise figure. This would ensure that minority interests were represented in Government. He did not now put this scheme forward officially as Taoiseach and realised that there were alternative ideas. He appreciated it was hard to impose power sharing directly but commended to the Secretary of State the need to seek means nevertheless of drawing into the government in Northern Ireland representatives of all communities. The people of the North were probably more ready to see some kind of power sharing than were their political leaders. He did not wish to press the Secretary of State further on his ideas, realising that he would need time to feel his way ahead.

In further discussion the Taoiseach and Tanaiste made the following additional points:

(i) The Taoiseach drew the Secretary of State's attention to remarks by Dr Paisley in an interview in 1971 and again in a little-reported speech in Londonderry in November 1979 which indicated that the DUP leader might at heart be ready to work for close relations with the Republic so long as the majority remained in control. But he realised Dr Paisley might not be able to carry

his followers along that road.

(ii) The Taoiseach referred to the visit he had recently received from a group of Northern Ireland business and professional men. He felt their spokesman, Mr McCartney, had been under some pressure from his colleagues not to go too far and that they had not been united in their views. They were not therefore consistent in what they had said publicly or in their written and oral presentations to him. But he welcomed the approach. He had in addition received indications that a number of moderate unionists and others welcomed the steps he had taken over the Irish Constitution.

(iii) The Tanaiste urged the Secretary of State vigorously to convey the message that things were changing in Northern Ireland, as well as in Great Britain and the Republic, and that unionists needed to adapt their ideas to these changes.

In conclusion the Secretary of State said he was unable to answer the Taoiseach's and Tanaiste's questions on the timescale of developments in Northern Ireland. Timing, like presentation, was delicate and was of crucial importance. He noted that the Taoiseach would like to advance as fast as possible, accepting the need not to trip on the way. He welcomed the Taoiseach's hope that the outcome of the Summit on 6 November would provide the background against which he could proceed. He was anxious that nothing should be said or done which would give an impression that made his task more difficult. The process of opening up discussion and widening political understanding could only be slow and must be handled with care.

#### The Guarantee

The Taoiseach referred to his "crusade" to change the Constitution of the Republic. He had been pleased by the recent debate in the Dail; the Irish Government was now in a stronger position, three Socialist TDs being more ready to give support than they had been.

He now hoped to make progress, but it would take some six months to work up ideas into detailed proposals. He would succeed only if there was seen to be a response. The formulation of the Guarantee on the border was crucial in this respect. He drew the Secretary of State's attention to the wish expressed by King George V in 1920 that the Council of Ireland would bring North and South closer together. He also referred to the formulation of the Guarantee at Sunningdale. In his view, the UK Government had never pursued that declaration in positive terms. He was anxious to see a form of words for the Guarantee which expressed support for unity if that should be the wish of people in Northern Ireland. Such a statement would be of great help to him and he doubted if he could succeed without it.

The Tanaiste in further discussion emphasised the importance of a reformulation of the Guarantee. He went on to point out that it would in addition be valuable if the UK Government could publicly accept a continuing role in the process of reconciliation and so in creating the situation in which the people of Northern Ireland would give their consent to change.

The Secretary of State noted the views of the Taoiseach and the Tanaiste and referred to what had been said after the talks between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach's predecessor in May 1980. He pointed out the difficulty in being seen to encourage unity and so in creating a reaction in Northern Ireland which would slow rather than hasten the achievement of that goal. He was sure they were aware of this risk.

#### Publication of the Joint Studies

The Taoiseach reminded the Secretary of State of his wish that Anglo-Irish relations should not be conducted with undue secrecy. He was concerned lest the publication only of the summary of the Joint Studies should encourage some people to think that there was more which was being kept secret. This would expose both Governments to the charge of subterfuge. The summary would be seen to be very thin. Moreover, his predecessor would know of the

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existence of the Joint Studies and might press him for the publication of the full reports. He would find it hard to deny their existence in those circumstances. This would create further suspicion about the whole exercise and would lose the Taoiseach much of the useful credibility he now had amongst moderate unionists. He wondered therefore about the reaction of the British Government to the publication of the full reports, subject to reviewing the texts to make them suitable and accepting that much of the security report might need to be omitted. He would like the matter to be considered further before 6 November.

The Secretary of State noted the Taoiseach's views. It was important for Anglo-Irish relations not to be hindered by suspicions which might result from unnecessary secrecy and agreed that both Governments should consider the matter for the Summit meeting. He could not however give any undertaking.

#### All Ireland Court

The Taoiseach referred to the difficulties extradition created for the Irish Government. A change in the Constitution would require a referendum and he did not think that that was a road which he could follow. It was important therefore to gain the maximum from the extra-territorial provisions. Their effective implementation was hindered by difficulties over evidence and in particular because Police officers from the North could not at present undertake interrogations in the Republic. He hoped that the establishment of an All Ireland Court would open the way to overcoming this difficulty. Interrogation by British Police officers of suspects detained in the Republic raised a number of sensitivities but he hoped they could be lessened if there was an All Ireland Court. And he said that if such a court were set up the Irish Government could try to overcome the difficulty with interrogations.

The Secretary of State emphasised to the Taoiseach the great importance of effective co-operation on security. It was hard to explain to people at large what were the Republic's difficulties with extradition. He greatly welcomed the co-operation given and the way in which it had been seen to work in recent days, especially with the Dunne kidnapping and the arrest of two people in the Republic preparing to explode a device in Northern Ireland. If there was not seen to be effective security co-operation, progress would be much harder and many of the things which the Taoiseach would like to see would be more difficult to achieve. On the All Ireland Court, he noted the Taoiseach's views and suggested that the Attorneys General of the two countries should examine the matter further.

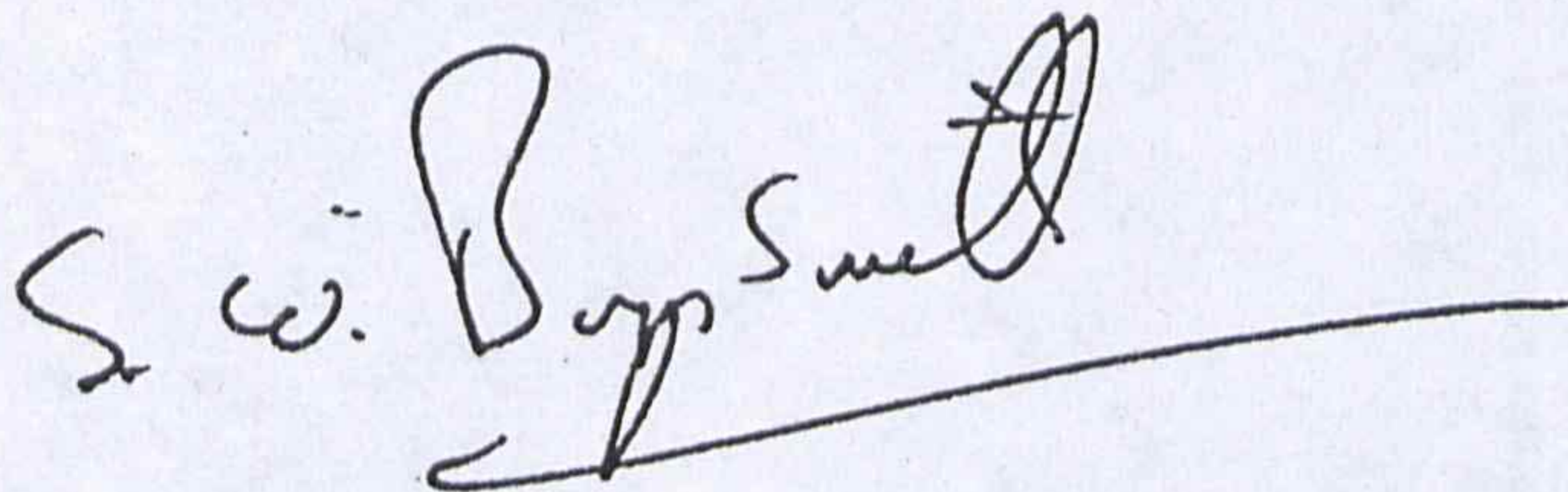
#### Economic Affairs

The Taoiseach said that the Irish Government was keen to see the establishment of a gas pipeline and awaited the views of the UK Government. If security problems could be overcome it would also welcome the re-establishment of the electricity interconnector.

The Secretary of State noted the Taoiseach's views and pointed out that on gas the outcome would depend on the price charged. There would no doubt have to be some hard bargaining.

In further discussion the Secretary of State said that he had been impressed by the sincerity and enthusiasm of Dr O'Regan of Co-Operation North, whom he had recently met. He noted that the organisation was seeking financial support from both Governments as well as from the European Commission and elsewhere. He thought this was a matter which could be examined in more detail and that the Taoiseach might wish to mention it to the Prime Minister.

The Taoiseach expressed his support for Co-Operation North and said he was anxious to encourage the establishment of a network of links between organisations in the North and the South. At the moment, a good many more people travelled from North to South than in the other direction and he would like to encourage more citizens of the Republic to conduct business in Northern Ireland. He noted what the Secretary of State said about the wish of Co-Operation North for Government funds and pointed to the possible damage that such support could do for the organisation's credibility in Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "S. W. Boys Smith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

S W BOYS SMITH  
28 October 1981