



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 October 1981

Kear Davis

The Prime Minister has seen Sir Robert Armstrong's minute to her of 16 October about his visit to Dublin last Wednesday. She has made a number of comments.

The Prime Minister has approved the text of the announcement enclosed with Sir Robert Armstrong's minute which, it is proposed, should be issued on Tuesday 20 October announcing the forthcoming meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach.

As regards the form of the meeting itself, the Prime Minister would prefer to have note-takers present throughout her meeting with the Taoiseach. She would be content for Mr. Nally and Sir Robert Armstrong to join the discussion at some convenient moment. The Prime Minister agrees that community matters should be discussed between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Irish Foreign Minister. She agrees that the Secretary of State for Energy should participate in the discussions.

The Prime Minister thinks that it would be "very damaging" for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to visit Dublin ahead of her meeting with the Taoiseach. She feels this strongly in the light of the recent bombing attacks in London.

The Prime Minister agrees that the question of the publication of the Anglo/Irish joint studies is one which requires the most careful consideration. She herself does not wish to see the five studies published. However she believes that we shall be under great Parliamentary pressure to agree to publication and that there will be much suspicion if we refuse to do so. She therefore sees some force in the Taoiseach's argument. She has not taken a firm view in favour of publication but believes that it would be wise to review all five studies, in Sir Robert Armstrong's words, with "great care with an eye to publication". The Prime Minister is doubtful whether publication of a self-contained document not referring to the other joint studies would resolve suspicions in Parliament and elsewhere.

/ The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister is not clear what is meant by a Parliamentary Grouping which would be wider than the existing Anglo/Irish Parliamentary Group. She does not see how any "Parliamentary Grouping" could include members other than MPs. The Prime Minister has taken note of Sir Robert Armstrong's comment that it might not be helpful to the Taoiseach for her to comment in public on the Taoiseach's initiative about amendment of the Irish Constitution. She has noted that she has already commented in an interview which she gave to Mr. Hugh Evans in Melbourne on 29 September. I enclose a text of her remarks.

The Prime Minister is not happy with the suggestion that the phrase "Anglo/Irish Standing Conference" should be used to describe the proposed inter-governmental structure. She would prefer to stick to the title "Anglo/Irish Co-operation Council".

The Prime Minister is "very doubtful" about the proposal that there should be a "pre-summit" meeting between UK and Irish officials at the end of this month.

The Prime Minister would prefer a joint press conference or none at all at the end of the summit.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Roderic Lyne (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jim Buckley (Lord President's Office), Stephen Boys Smith (Northern Ireland Office), Stephen Gomersall (Lord Privy Seal's Office) and Jim Nursaw (Law Officers' Department).

*Yours ever*

*Richard Alexander*

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Cabinet Office.

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