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RH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

20 October, 1981

Dear Stephen,

Your Secretary of State had a word with the Prime Minister after Cabinet this morning about her view - which was recorded in Michael Alexander's letter of 19 October to David Wright - that it would be very damaging for him to visit Dublin in advance of her meeting with Dr Fitzgerald.

After a brief discussion the Prime Minister agreed, though still with some reluctance, that Mr Prior might pay such a visit, given the importance he attached to it as a possible means of making some progress in Anglo/Irish relations. She warned him that it was, in her view, a visit which would need to be particularly carefully prepared beforehand and equally carefully handled at the time.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Roderic Lyne (FCO), Jim Buckley (CSD), David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office), Stephen Gomersall (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Jim Nursaw (Law Officer's Department) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Sheila Whinnery.

S Boys-Smith  
Northern Ireland Office

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