

MEETING BETWEEN THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY AND  
IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER DESIGNATE IN LONDON : 14 OCTOBER 1981  
AT 09.45 HRS

Present:UK Side

The Rt Hon Lord Carrington  
Mr Fergusson  
Mr Lyne  
Mr Thomas

Irish Side

Senator Dooge  
Mr Mackernan

1. Senator Dooge asked the Secretary of State to convey to the Prime Minister the Taoiseach's sympathy over the bomb outrage in London the previous Saturday. The Irish were as horrified as we were. But they had not been surprised. They had no specific information as to whether it was the start of a campaign or a single gesture. Senator Dooge hoped that revulsion against the incident would help towards progress in Northern Ireland. He thought that progress had to go forward in two parallel phases: the violence had to be ended and political progress had to be made. They had already been successful in making a division between the relatives and the hunger strikers. Now the 5% of IRA activists in Northern Ireland had to be isolated from the 20% of sympathisers. The hunger strike had brought them closer together.
2. Senator Dooge said that the Taoiseach thought that it would be useful if there was a Ministerial meeting in preparation for the forthcoming Summit. Senator Dooge would be willing to come over to London to talk to Mr Prior. It was a year since the last Summit. If there had been no change of Government, the Irish would have expected a substantial advance at the next Summit. They recognised that there would not be a substantial advance, but they did want some advance. He would be able to indicate to Mr Prior aspects of the Irish Government's thinking which were not in the public domain. Civil servants could not do that. Lord Carrington thought Mr Prior might well feel that he had not yet been in the Northern Ireland job long enough to be in a position to discuss matters with Senator

Dooge in as much detail as both would wish. But he would put Senator Dooge's proposal to him.

3. Lord Carrington asked Senator Dooge what the Irish expected to get out of the Summit. Senator Dooge replied that, first, the Irish wanted a reaffirmation that the Joint Studies would continue. They hoped the content of the Studies might be made public. The secrecy had been of benefit to Dr Paisley. Perhaps we could agree to publish a summary. Second, there could be thoughts on the start of a political initiative. The Taoiseach had opened a public debate on the Irish Constitution. He did not know where the debate would lead. There would be no early move towards a referendum. How this would fit in with progress in Northern Ireland still had to be worked out. Another question that they were giving thought to was the absence of a representative body in Northern Ireland. Lord Carrington said that the British Government had been trying for the last two and a half years to establish a representative body but the problems of finding something acceptable to both the Catholic and Protestant communities had so far defeated them. In the absence of such a body, there were no new politicians coming forward. Senator Dooge thought that one of the tragedies of the hunger strike was that the morale of the SDLP had been badly affected: but they had now recovered and were ready to go forward again. Mr Fergusson added that it was more or less agreed that a summary of the Joint Studies should be published.

4. Senator Dooge asked what the British expected from the Summit. Lord Carrington replied that the British side did not expect a breakthrough. There were a lot of problems. Mr Prior had to be careful. He did not want to start off his term as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland as being considered hostile by the Protestants - or by the Catholics. Senator Dooge said that his wish for a meeting with Mr Prior was to enable them to get together to see how to get the best out of the Summit. It could be done without publicity. He would be willing to go to Belfast or to London. London would be preferable because it would be easier to keep it private. Lord Carrington said he would put this to Mr Prior.

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5. Senator Dooge and Lord Carrington agreed that the Summit should also cover EC and international issues: though the press would inevitably focus on Northern Ireland.

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