

CONFIDENTIAL



CC NIO
CO
HU
Inland

10 DOWNING STREET

Ⓟ

From the Private Secretary.

14 March 1983

Meeting between the Prime Minister and Dr. Garret FitzGerald at the
European Council

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 10 March and
Derek Hill's letter of the same date.

In response to the Irish request that the meeting between
the Prime Minister and Dr. FitzGerald should be rather longer
than we envisaged originally, could you please say that the Prime
Minister has asked me to make contact with Dr. FitzGerald's staff
on arrival in Brussels and see whether we can make provision, as
the Taoiseach wishes, for a 45 minute talk. I see little difficulty
about doing this but will find it easier to arrange on the spot.

I am copying this letter to Derek Hill (Northern Ireland
Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

11 March 1983

I am putting this to the P.S.

ASL 11/3

Dear John

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND DR GARRET FITZGERALD
AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Mr Prior has seen John Holmes' letter to you of 10 March and hopes that it will be possible for the Prime Minister to see Dr FitzGerald for 45 minutes when they attend the European Council. There may be little substantive that can be done at this stage on either side, but Mr Prior thinks that it would be all the more useful to make the meeting a little longer than was originally planned.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Holmes (FCO) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

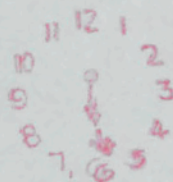
Derek Hill

DEREK HILL

Inland:

Mtgs with Tairaeach
PTG

11 MAR 1983





Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

May I say that we take
the point and will see on
arrival in Brussels whether
we can fit in 45 minutes or so ?

10 March 1983

A.S.C. 1/2.

Yes

Dear John,

Meeting between the Prime Minister and
Dr Garret FitzGerald at the European Council

I enclose a report of a talk HM Ambassador Dublin had with Dr Garret FitzGerald on 7 March. As you will see Dr FitzGerald put in a plea for his meeting with the Prime Minister at the European Council to be longer than the 20-30 minutes suggested by us. Sir L Figg has commented that there would be great advantage to us in the future if the time available could be extended to, say, 45 minutes.

Although the pressures on the Prime Minister's time at the European Council are fully recognised, Mr Pym wonders whether there might not be advantage in being flexible over the time. Dr FitzGerald evidently attaches great importance to it. To fall in with his wishes should be helpful in achieving our major objective (paragraph 3 of my letter of 28 February) of ensuring that he does and says very little in connection with Northern Ireland for as long as possible. A longer meeting could also help to reduce the pressure on the Irish Government to seek an early summit meeting, before the general election.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

John Holmes

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 240
CONFIDENTIAL
FM DUBLIN 071642Z MAR 83
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 71 OF 7 MARCH 1983
INFO ROUTINE NIO (LONDON) (PERSONAL FOR PUS)

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS
PERSONAL FOR PUS

1. THE TAOISEACH AND HIS WIFE CAME TO LUNCH WITH US TODAY AND I HAD HALF-AN-HOUR ALONE WITH HIM AFTERWARDS. HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD ASKED THROUGH THE IRISH EMBASSY FOR, IF POSSIBLE, AN HOUR WITH THE PRIME MINISTER SOME TIME DURING THE NEXT EUROPEAN COUNCIL. HE HAD JUST HEARD THAT ONLY 20 TO 30 MINUTES WOULD BE POSSIBLE. IN HIS SHORT PERIOD DURING HIS PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION HE HAD NOT HAD TIME TO GET TO KNOW THE PRIME MINISTER AND MUCH WANTED AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY OF DOING SO QUIETLY AND WITHOUT THE POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE OF A BILATERAL MEETING. HE HAD NOTHING SPECIFIC TO DISCUSS AND THIS WAS PRECISELY WHY HE WANTED MORE THAN 20 TO 30 MINUTES, WHICH WOULD NOT GIVE TIME FOR THEM TO HAVE A MEETING OF MINDS OR A TOUR D'HORIZON.

2. I KNOW THE PRIME MINISTER'S TIMETABLE IS VERY TIGHT. HOWEVER, I THINK THERE WOULD BE GREAT ADVANTAGE TO US IN THE FUTURE IF SHE COULD POSSIBLY EXTEND THE TIME AVAILABLE TO SAY 45 MINUTES. AT THE MOMENT WE HAVE LITTLE COMFORT TO OFFER A WELL DISPOSED IRISH GOVERNMENT ON THE NORTH AND THEY ARE DESPERATELY WORRIED ABOUT THE POSITION OF THE SDLP. IN THIS SITUATION I THINK IT WOULD BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY VERY IMPORTANT TO DR FITZGERALD IF HE COULD HAVE A LONGER TIME TO DISCUSS THINGS GENERALLY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND TO TRY AND ESTABLISH SOME MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. FITZGERALD SHOULD BE WITH US FOR FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AND, AS I HAVE SAID, I AM SURE THAT IF WE ACCEDE TO HIS WISHES WE WILL FIND THE GOING EASIER IN THE FUTURE.

FIGG

LIMITED
RID
PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
SIR J BULLARD
MR GOODISON

CONFIDENTIAL

AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN, LONDAIN.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

9 March 1983

17 Grosvenor Place
SW1X 7HR

Handwritten: Ireland
A.S.C. 10/3

Dear Mr. Coles,

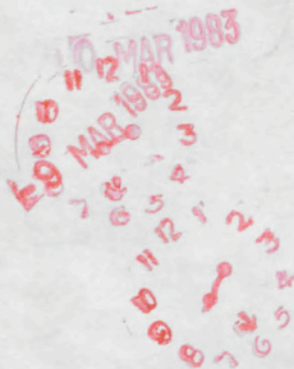
att
Thank you for your letter of 4 March about the meeting between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister in the margins of the European Council later this month. I have conveyed the contents to Dublin.

*Yours Sincerely,
Paul D. Dempsey*

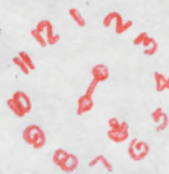
Paul D. Dempsey
Minister Plenipotentiary.

A.J. Coles Esq.,
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister,
No. 10 Downing Street,
London SW1.

10 MAR 1983



10 MAR 1983





FILE

RWJ

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 March, 1983

Thank you for your letter of 1 March in which you conveyed the Taoiseach's interest in a meeting with the Prime Minister in the margins of the European Council Meeting in Brussels later this month.

The Prime Minister would be glad to have an informal meeting with the Taoiseach in the margins of the Council. But, given the pressures of the Council timetable, and the likelihood of other bilateral meetings, Mrs. Thatcher thinks that it would be best to plan on the basis that this informal meeting will be comparatively short, lasting from some 20 - 30 minutes.

I suggest that we do not try to fix a precise time now. I shall be glad to make a definite arrangement with the Taoiseach's staff on arrival in Brussels.

As regards publicity, we should prefer that no announcement be made to the press in advance and that the terms in which the press are informed afterwards about the meeting should be agreed in Brussels.

A. J. COLES

Paul D. Dempsey, Esq.,

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 March, 1983.

Meeting between the Prime Minister and Dr. Garret Fitzgerald
at the European Council

Thank you for your letter of 28 February about the above subject.

Shortly after I received it, the Charge d'Affaires of the Irish Embassy wrote to me to convey the Taoiseach's wish for a meeting with the Prime Minister. I enclose a copy of his letter from which you will see that Dr. Fitzgerald proposed a meeting of one hour during which there would be a "relaxed general discussion with the Prime Minister of all matters in the Anglo-Irish relationship".

I have consulted the Prime Minister who has stipulated that the meeting must not be a formal one, and that it should not last for more than 20-30 minutes at most.

After consulting you on the telephone today, I replied to the letter from Mr. Dempsey. I now enclose a copy of that reply.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosures to John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office), and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

BPP



file

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Meeting between the Prime Minister and Dr. Fitzgerald

Thank you for your minute of 4 March about your conversation with Mr. Nally.

The Chargé d'Affaires of the Irish Embassy wrote to me earlier this week conveying the Taoiseach's request for a meeting with the Prime Minister at the European Council.

I consulted the Prime Minister and the FCO and replied to Mr. Dempsey last week. A copy of my reply is attached.

You may care to draw on my letter to Mr. Dempsey should you wish to speak to Mr. Nally again - though he will hear soon enough from the Irish Embassy.

As I have said in my letter to Mr. Dempsey, I would rather wait until I get to Brussels before arranging a definite time for the meeting. We may well have to fit in other bilaterals and there may be other claims on the Prime Minister's time which we cannot foresee now.

AJCOB

4 March 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A083/0738

MR COLES

Mr Dermot Nally, the Government Secretary in Dublin, rang at 5.00 pm this evening.

2. He said that he had been instructed by the Taoiseach to say that the Taoiseach hoped that there would be an opportunity for the Prime Minister and him to have a bilateral meeting in the margins of the European Council at Brussels on 21 and 22 March. He envisaged a general talk, but something more than a mere reprise de contact. The hope and aim would be that there should be no press reporting of the meeting. The Taoiseach would not be accompanied by his Foreign Minister; only by Mr Nally.

3. I said that I thought that the Prime Minister would indeed be expecting to meet the Taoiseach in the margins of the European Council; but I should like to report our conversation to her, and to confirm her agreement when I had done so. I said that I thought that the Prime Minister would be content that such a meeting should be tete-a-tete, with Dr FitzGerald accompanied only by Mr Nally and the Prime Minister accompanied only by me (or you). I thought that the Prime Minister might well sympathise with the aim of avoiding any press reporting of the meeting, but I wondered whether this was entirely feasible: the press were almost bound to ask whether there had been a bilateral contact, and it would be necessary to be prepared with a reply to any such questions as might be asked.

4. I should be grateful if you could let me know whether I may confirm to Mr Nally that the Prime Minister will be content to meet the Taoiseach on this basis in the margins of the meeting of the European Council on 21 and 22 March. We can then consider at what point during the two days such a meeting might best be held: perhaps before the opening of the session on the Tuesday morning, so that the bilateral meeting cannot drag on indefinitely.

RCA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

4 March 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Possible Meeting with Dr. FitzGerald at the European Council

I attach a letter from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office which refers to your earlier agreement that you would meet Dr. FitzGerald in the margins of the European Council and suggests that we plan for such a meeting.

The Charge d'Affaires at the Irish Embassy has since spoken to me on the telephone and written to me, stating that the Taoiseach would be interested in holding a meeting with you. He proposed a meeting of about an hour and wanted to have it at a time when it would not awaken great press interest. I merely undertook to report the request to you and said that, in the event of a meeting, I thought it would be sufficient to tell the press simply that it had happened.

There is no suggestion that this should be a formal Anglo/Irish meeting.

It must not be a formal meeting - nor last word.

Can I confirm to Mr. Dempsey that you will be prepared to have an informal meeting with the Taoiseach in the margins of the Council and agree with him on a suitable time?

20-30 mins at most.

A.J.C.

3 March, 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

AMBASÁID NA HÉIREANN, LONDAIN.



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

17 Grosvenor Place
SW1X 7HR

1 March 1983

Dear Private Secretary

Further to our telephone conversation this morning I am writing to confirm the Taoiseach's interest in a meeting with the Prime Minister en marge of the European Council meeting in Brussels later this month. As I mentioned, the Taoiseach would wish to have a relaxed general discussion with the Prime Minister of all matters in the Anglo-Irish relationship and for this purpose would welcome a meeting lasting about an hour. He would consider it useful to have such a discussion at a time when there will be no special press focus on their meeting. You asked me about a press communique. I can confirm that the Taoiseach would wish any communique to be simple in accordance with the spirit in which he is approaching the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Paul D. Dempsey
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

Mr. A.J. Coles
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
No. 10 Downing Street
London SW1.

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 February 1983

Dear John,

Meeting Between the Prime Minister and Dr Garret FitzGerald at
the European Council

The Prime Minister agreed last month that if asked by his Irish counterpart about the possibility of a meeting between herself and Dr FitzGerald in the margins of the European Council in March, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should say that the Prime Minister would indeed expect to meet Dr FitzGerald in the margins of that meeting (your minute of 17 January to Sir R Armstrong).

This subject did not come up when Mr Pym met Mr Peter Barry in Brussels on 24 January, but it was briefly touched on at the meeting in London on 1 February between Mr Barry and the Northern Ireland Secretary. It is clear that the Irish expect such a meeting to take place, even though they have not yet formally suggested it; on past form they may not do so until just before the European Council. Subject to your views, it would nonetheless be sensible to plan on the basis that a meeting between the two Heads of Government will take place.

We assume that the Prime Minister would wish any meeting to be short and informal. The objectives might be to indicate HMG's approval of the cautious and studied way in which Dr FitzGerald has chosen to approach Northern Ireland policy, and to encourage him to make the minimum of public statements on the subject for as long as possible. The meeting could also be used to make the Government's position on Northern Ireland clear to Dr FitzGerald, and in particular to enlighten him on certain aspects of our policy, eg in relation to the SDLP, on which his Ministers have shown themselves to be poorly informed.

/It is

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



It is possible that Dr FitzGerald will try to get the Prime Minister to agree that an Anglo-Irish summit meeting should be held after the British election. It would be difficult to refuse without endangering the present relatively helpful approach of the Irish Government. The Prime Minister might say that she would be prepared to consider a summit then provided that excessive expectations about what such a meeting might achieve can be kept in check and as long as UK domestic political considerations allow.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

Ireland: meetings with
Taoiseach P.H.

8 FEB 1983

