



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 November 1984

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Dear Charles,

Anglo/Irish Summit: 18-19 November 1984

I wrote yesterday summarising the Irish press line on 20 and 21 November. This covers the line on 22 November.

All the dailies led with the story about the Taoiseach's private meeting with his Fine Gael parliamentary party. Prominence was also given to Mr Hurd's press conference in Belfast the day before and of Mr Spring's description of the Northern Ireland Secretary's remarks as "astonishing and unacceptable". The leader writers joined the condemnation. The 'Irish Times' claimed that Mr Hurd was "hardly an expert so soon" to be laying down the limits of Irish interest in the affairs of Northern Ireland, and said that his and Mrs Thatcher's comments call "for stronger words from the Irish Government than have so far been issued". The "Irish Press" (generally pro Fianna Fail) demanded that "the Taoiseach should make it clear that if there is to be no cooperation on the political front there can be no cooperation on policing".

In a piece on the meeting of the Fine Gael parliamentary party the same paper reported that some Fine Gael TDs had said that Dr FitzGerald should have asserted himself much more strongly after the Summit. It noted that the Fine Gael TDs were united in the criticism of Mrs Thatcher's "behaviour". The Government Chief Whip is reported to have said that a great deal of anger had been expressed about Mrs Thatcher's press conference, particularly "her dismissal of the alienation of the nationalists in the North and the manner and tone of her dismissal of the Forum options". Fine Gael TDs "strongly expressed the view that Dr FitzGerald should present Mrs Thatcher with an ultimatum at the Summit in the Spring and should publicly attack her if she again failed to come up with any response to the Irish position".

On the prospects for continuing contacts at official level, the 'Irish Independent' (generally supportive of the Coalition Government) reported that the "Anglo-Irish slanging match is causing serious problems for the Irish negotiating team", but the paper says that the Irish side

/"remained



"remained adamant that real progress along the road to equalising the Nationalist and Unionist identities within Northern Ireland had been made at Chequers".

It is worth adding as a post-script to all this vituperation that our Dublin Embassy have told us that the DFA have expressed hopes to them that the public furore will now die away.

*Yours ever,
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Private Secretary

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