PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH

You have an hour with the Taoiseach tomorrow afternoon. The only subject is the Anglo-Irish Agreement, though he may raise Irish concern about recent incidents at Sellafield.

Dr. FitzGerald's political position has weakened dramatically in recent weeks, and his fortunes are said to be at their lowest ebb ever. His recent reshuffle misfired. He faces a vote of no confidence on Thursday (which he is expected to survive - just). The only thing which has gone right for him is the Agreement: and his meeting with you therefore assumes great importance for him. He will want it to appear successful. You, on the other hand, need to be seen to have pressed him hard on security co-operation and the SDLP's unhelpful attitude. You will have to cope with Molyneaux and Paisley next week.

In short, he badly needs a meeting which signals that all is going well with the implementation of the Anglo-Irish Agreement: you need one which signals that we are not satisfied with the Irish Government's performance under the Agreement. How the meeting is presented publicly will depend on what sort of assurances you can wring out of him in private.

The main points which you will want to get across to him are:

- (i) there is no question of our being deflected from implementing the Agreement; but
- (ii) the <u>situation in the North</u> is very difficult and we badly need the help of the Irish Government in persuading moderate Unionist opinion to look more benignly on the Agreement. You might tell him

- about your recent meeting with leading figures in the North (record in folder);
- (iii) this means in the first place that the Irish

 Government and its Ministers must stop claiming too

 much publicly about the role which the Agreement
 gives the Republic in the North;
- (iv) it also means a more effective effort on security co-operation. Most recent terrorist incidents have been in border areas. There need to be greater resources devoted to surveillance, intelligence and operations against terrorists. We do not question their commitment. But their present efforts are not enough;
- which is far from what we were led to expect. They have not supported the security forces. And their attitude to participation in talks about devolution has been unconstructive. The view is gaining ground that they prefer the present situation to any arrangement for devolved government. If they persist in this, it will be very difficult, indeed impossible, to secure moderate Unionist support for the Agreement;
- (vi) these are the issues which must be given priority.

 Matters like setting up an <u>International Fund</u> and an <u>Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Body</u> are important but <u>secondary</u> in the present situation. We must get the basics right;
- (vii) you can applaud the Taoiseach's decision if he announces it to sign forthwith the <u>European</u>

 <u>Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism</u>. But welcome as this is, it does <u>not</u> diminish the need for early progress on the other points. You cannot stress strongly enough the difficulties you face in dealing with the Unionist parties and Unionist opinion generally.

SECRET - 3 -If Dr. FitzGerald raises Sellafield you can point to contacts between British and Irish officials which have agreed improved procedures for notifying incidents; i.e. the new draft Nuclear Emergencies Agreement which we have just tabled and on which we await their comments. I attach more detailed briefs. CHARLES POWELL 18 February 1986 LO4 ASJ