

Ref: B06892

MR COLES

Anglo- Irish Summit:
Possible Statement to the House of Commons

We have been considering with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office whether the Prime Minister should be advised to make a statement to the House following the Anglo- Irish Summit on 7 November. As you know, statements are not normally made after bilateral summit meetings with Community partners and we do not want to give this particular summit meeting undue prominence. But an exception was made after the last Anglo- Irish Summit (on 6 November 1981) and there will certainly be pressure for that precedent to be followed on this occasion. This will be the first Anglo- Irish Summit for two years, following a particularly difficult period in Anglo- Irish relations. It has already attracted critical attention: Mr James Molyneux of the Ulster Unionist Council wrote to the Prime Minister on 22 October to warn that it would bring "disastrous consequences" to Northern Ireland. It seems to me that the absence of a statement by the Prime Minister is likely to give rise to greater criticism and wilder speculation about what took place than a clear statement accompanied by publication of the joint report and review of the work of the AIIC since November 1981. I attach an illustrative first draft which draws on the language of the draft communique. It will of course need expansion and amendment in the light of what actually happens.

2. I am copying this minute to the private secretaries to the Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Northern Ireland, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

David Goodall

4 November 1983

A D S GOODALL

DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS

I should like, with permission, Mr Speaker, to make a statement on the discussions that I held with the Taoiseach on 7 November. I was accompanied by my Rt Hon Friends, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Dr FitzGerald was accompanied by Mr Spring, the Tanaiste, and by Dr Barry, the Irish Foreign Minister.

2. This was our first meeting for two years. It took place within the framework of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council which we set up at our meeting on 6 November 1981 in order to assist the continuing development of the relationship between the two Governments. Rt Hon and Hon Members will be glad to know that the meeting provided the occasion for a useful and constructive exchange of views and demonstrated that relations between our two countries have returned to normal after the difficulties of last year.

3. The Taoiseach and I reviewed the state of work of the AIIC at both Ministerial and official levels. In this connection, we approved a joint report describing the co-operation which has taken place between the two countries since the publication of the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies in November 1981. We particularly welcomed the satisfactory conclusion of negotiations for the supply of Kinsale Gas to Northern Ireland. We agreed that the report and the review annexed to it, with the exception of the section on security matters, should be published; copies have already been placed in the Library of the House.

4. Dr FitzGerald and I also discussed other issues in Anglo-Irish relations, including the situation in Northern Ireland. We reaffirmed our steadfast opposition to violence and expressed satisfaction with the co-operation between the security forces of the two countries. We also discussed a wide range of international issues, notably current issues in the European Community.

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10 DOWNING STREET

Mr. Fletcher
for info.

[Handwritten initials]

From the Private Secretary

MR. GOODALL
CABINET OFFICE

ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT

Thank you for your minute of 4 November.

The Prime Minister has decided to make a Statement on the Anglo-Irish Summit on 8 November before she leaves for Bonn. I shall be grateful if you would arrange for the draft Statement which you attached to your minute to be revised after the Summit and sent to me, together with Notes for Supplementaries, for the Prime Minister's box on Monday night.

I am copying this minute to Peter Ricketts (FCO) and John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office).

A. J. COLES

4 November 1983

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