

RECORD OF PLENARY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE
IRISH PRIME MINISTER, AN TAOISEACH, HELD AT CHEQUERS ON
MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER 1983

Present:

Prime Minister	Dr Garret FitzGerald
Foreign & Commonwealth Secretary	Mr Dick Spring
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	Mr Peter Barry
Sir Robert Armstrong	Mr Noel Dorr
Sir Philip Woodfield	Mr Dermot Nally
Sir Julian Bullard	Mr Sean Donlon
Sir Ewart Bell	Mr Paul Dempsey
Mr A C Goodison	Mr Peter Prendergast
Mr A D S Goodall	Mr Michael Lillis
Mr A J E Brennan	Mr Brian McCarthy
Mr A J Coles	Mr Declan Kelly
Mr P H C Eyers	Miss Orla O'Hanrahan
Mr D Barclay	

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The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach took note of the Steering Committee's Joint Report. At the Prime Minister's invitation, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary gave a summary account of the discussions which the Ministers had had immediately before the plenary meeting. The Ministers had considered European Community questions in the context of the coming Athens Summit. They had agreed that it was necessary for the Summit to reach conclusions on the agenda and that the consequences of a failure to reach agreement would be very serious. The budgetary question was seen as a key issue and the UK ideas for a safety net had been discussed. Mr. Barry had referred to the German proposals on future financing and said that it was possible that these would recommend themselves to the Irish. He and Mr. Prior had said that they would not go far enough. The Ministers had agreed that discussion of the CAP at Athens would be most important. Mr. Barry had stressed the importance of milk for Irish agriculture but had recognised that the surplus could not go on

rising. There was agreement that price control was necessary, though he thought that a difference of view would have emerged between the two sides if this question had been pressed further than it was. The Irish side had expressed their extreme concern at the prospect of a super-levy on milk production.

The Irish side had raised the Commission's proposal for treating the island of Ireland as a single region for the purpose of the sheepmeat regime, and expressed concern at the letter which Mr. Jopling had written opposing this. The UK side had explained their wish to avoid problems of a political sort. Both sides had taken note that the proposal had been withdrawn and that the existing arrangements were to continue for the next two years. Mr. Prior had undertaken to examine the question further.

Sir Geoffrey Howe continued that Mr. Spring had raised the question of possible radioactive pollution originating at Windscale. Both sides recognised that this was a cause for genuine anxiety and had undertaken to keep in touch.

The Ministers had also touched on international issues and noted that it was important that a democratic government should now been seen to emerge in Grenada. He had himself mentioned the importance of the Irish vote in the General Assembly on the Falklands issue.

Mr. Barry said that the Ministers had also discussed "new policies" and stressed the importance of these for the development of the Community. The Community must give the impression of planning for employment. Sir Geoffrey Howe said that lead-free petrol and air transport had been touched on in this connection.

The Prime Minister asked the Taoiseach how he saw the Community developing. She was concerned that the current negotiations had not yet proceeded far enough. The important issues must be settled at Athens. The Taoiseach said that he had been worried ten days before but had noted the unexpectedly sudden agreement on the Mediterranean acquis. He was not sure what conclusion to draw from that. It could be an indication that the French thought that it might be better to make progress at Athens so that they did not come under

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pressure to make progress during their Presidency. The nearer the European elections came the less attraction there would be for Paris in solving agricultural problems. And the Germans were unwilling to agree to additional own resources without acceptance of enlargement but for others enlargement created problems. The Prime Minister said that she had found the French position much stronger than she had expected. President Mitterrand saw the European elections as likely to be the expression of a verdict on his period in office so far. He said that the nearer the elections came the harder it would be for him to make compromises. The French therefore wanted problems sorted out at Athens or deferred until after the European elections. Sir Geoffrey Howe said that much was now coming to the boil and he was sure that it was right to suppose that the French perceived the need for greater urgency. The UK side had found Mr. Papandreou also anxious that the main outstanding problems should be settled at Athens. Unless they were solved there would be increasing disorder within the Community and Community leaders would become a laughing stock for the electorate. The Prime Minister said that when Mr. Papandreou was in London it had seemed that he had no detailed ideas for an approach to a solution. He thought there would have to be a grand compromise at Athens. But the issues were so important that unless the main work was done beforehand there was no hope of a compromise at Athens. Mr. Barry interjected that in practice the Foreign Ministers had five days to do what was necessary before Athens. The Taoiseach said that he had had rather a different impression talking to Mr. Papandreou and Mr. Varfis. They thought that they had worked out a way of identifying the problems and of providing a framework for discussion. He hoped that they would produce this. Sir Geoffrey Howe said he thought that the Taoiseach's impression was correct. The question was whether the framework which the Greeks had in mind was the right one. Mr. Papandreou might be looking for a compromise, which would not solve the problem. But Mr. Papandreou had said that he recognised that any solution would have to get ten votes. The Prime Minister thought that Mr. Papandreou was listening to all his partners now and hoped to formulate a grand view which would emerge at Athens. But the general lines of the solution were needed before then. The Taoiseach commented that any framework would contain unsatisfactory elements but he was a little more optimistic than he had been. Sir Geoffrey Howe said that he too was optimistic that

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what needed to be done could be done if all concentrated on obtaining a solution at Athens. The Taoiseach said that it was likely that one or two problems would remain which could only be settled at Athens. The Prime Minister noted that there were points on which the UK side could not compromise. The Taoiseach said that the Irish recognised the British problem. But milk was much larger in terms of impact on GNP for the Irish. There had to be a solution which did not freeze the position left in Ireland by the long relationship of dependency on Great Britain. The single issue offsetting the industrial disadvantages to Ireland of Community membership was the possibility of recovering from that earlier situation. Freezing of their milk industry would create an unacceptable situation. That said, he recognised that it was not possible to go on producing milk at the present rate as a community.

The Prime Minister said that she was aware of the Irish problem. She understood that the Spanish would require a definitive statement on enlargement following the Athens Summit. They had delayed their referendum on membership of NATO to enable them, she thought, to link the two issues in the electorate's mind. The Taoiseach said that if the French were able to agree to the principle of enlargement and fix a date for concluding the negotiations, even a long way ahead, that would help both the Germans and the Spaniards, who wanted to see early progress in the enlargement negotiations, though he could imagine that the French would not wish to do that before the European election. The Prime Minister thought much depended on the length of the transitional period. People were talking in terms of very long periods. Everyone agreed that it would be good from the general political point of view to have Spain and Portugal within the Community. That said, enlargement raised difficult problems. The southern states would want some sort of arrangements for agriculture comparable to those in the north. The Taoiseach said that he was surprised that the Mediterranean acquis had been agreed. He shared the Prime Minister's concern about Spain and Portugal. He was also concerned about the question of increasing own resources. For his part he was prepared to accept the increased cost of enlargement but he would be unhappy if the limitation on own resources implied that there were insufficient resources to maintain the existing CAP albeit reformed. If the additional costs arising from enlargement and from new policies and from the commitment to double the size of the Regional Fund were taken into account, by 1986 1.2% or 1.25% own resources would be

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necessary as a starter; this might need to rise to 1.4% later. If the Commission's proposals for modifying this figure through the European Parliament were not accepted but the need for reference to all twelve Parliaments retained, the Community would find itself facing further rows every two or three years. The Prime Minister said she found the prospect of 1.4% horrific for a net contributor. She thought it might not be necessary: VAT and levies were buoyant and should increase as Europe came out of the recession. As a net contributor the UK would look with great hostility at any increase. The Taoiseach suggested that, even making stringent assumptions about the CAP, Europe would be faced with a very serious problem. The Prime Minister said that without serious restraint there would be rows every year. Sir Geoffrey Howe said that the sensitivity in the UK Parliament on the question of an increase in own resources was now very great. It would only be possible to carry Parliament if there was a satisfactory conclusion on the UK budget share and on the CAP. The Commission's proposal that modification should be decided by the European Parliament would break the camel's back not with a straw but a log.

The Taoiseach said that he thought that the UK and the Republic would find themselves on different sides on the way which the CAP was to be limited. This was something which would have to be fought out at Athens. He asked the Prime Minister whether UK thinking on EMS had evolved. The Prime Minister said that it had not yet done so. There had been times when the UK had been glad not to be tied to the Deutschmark. She wondered what currency would be devalued next. Would it be the French? When there was a devaluation the EMS needed someone from outside to take the chair. The horse-trading at previous devaluations had been quite horrifying. The time had not yet arrived for UK entry. One problem was that any change in the world energy position moved the rate for the pound up and down very sharply.

The Prime Minister noted that the Kinsale gas deal seemed very fair. There was good in it for both sides. The Taoiseach said that given the quantity of gas available the Republic could have used the whole field itself but it seemed right to share it as a symbol of cooperation.

The Prime Minister asked how the Irish saw the Lebanese situation and in particular the question of UNIFIL. Mr. Barry said that he thought that UNIFIL was performing a useful function in Lebanon even though it was not the function which they had been sent to carry out in the first place. The Irish were not hopeful of anything very favourable emerging from Geneva but they had sent out a new battalion only the previous week. The Irish had not been asked by the Syrians to take part as observers and thought this just as well. The Prime Minister noted that there were no observers in position yet. She had understood from Mr. Papandreou that no observers would go in until there was an agreement on political reconciliation. Sir G Howe said that there was a general point which ought to be stressed. There were now more than 10,000 troops in the Lebanon from outside the Middle East. This represented the price which had to be paid for failure to reach agreement on the ground. Foreign troops could not stay indefinitely. Nor were they deployed in the most rational place. It was important that the reconciliation talks should get on. But he was uncertain whether the Syrians in fact wanted a settlement. It was necessary to work towards the withdrawal of all foreign troops.

The Taoiseach said that he had noted in the press the suggestion that the United States might retaliate for the bombing of their headquarters in Lebanon. This was clearly a source for concern. He asked if the UK side thought it likely to happen. Sir G Howe said that the UK side was also concerned. Retaliation was not the right policy. Firm action against identified groups who had initiated attacks was justified but broader retaliatory action could not be wise. The Taoiseach said he thought such action would be dangerous for those concerned. The Lebanon was not an area in which it was wise to get more deeply involved. He noted that there did not seem total cohesion of the Multi-national Force. The Prime Minister pointed out that the different national components of the force had different rules of engagement. The Taoiseach noted that in the case of UNIFIL the Irish rules of

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engagement differed from those of other contributors. Mr. Donlon said that the Irish had lost in all 29 men in the connection with UNIFIL. Mr. Dorr said that half of these had been killed in hostile engagements and half had died from traffic accidents and so on. The Prime Minister said that Lebanon was a unique problem. It was now complicated by the fighting in Tripoli. The terms of reference of the Multi-National Force related to Beirut only, though clearly if they were attacked from outside Beirut they might have to reply simply as a matter of self-defence. The UK's contribution was purely symbolic. There were only a hundred or so men. They did not normally guard a fixed point (although they were guarding the security talks) but carried out patrols. She thought all concerned were aware that they were up against something which had been unexpected in the form of suicide attacks. Guerillas always had the advantage of the element of surprise. Self-defence was certainly warranted for all members of the MNF but what that entitled them to do was not always clear. The Taoiseach said that he was not happy about the position of Irish forces in UNIFIL in Southern Lebanon. They were surrounded by the Israelis. At the moment their only useful function was that they gave refugees who had returned to their homes in the area a sense of security. But the possible effect of withdrawing the Irish contingent was a matter of concern.

Turning to Northern Ireland Mr. Prior said that the Ministers' conversation ~~was~~ had no doubt covered the same ground as the conversation between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister. Both sides were deeply concerned at the continuing violence in Northern Ireland/^{and} at the reduction in support for constitutional nationalists. They were concerned at the growth of support for the Provisional Sinn Fein and at the alienation of Catholics from constitutional government. He expressed concern that journalists - and he had in mind in particular the Weekend World programme broadcast the day before - had raised issues which had not been discussed between

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the two sides in any depth nor worked through by anyone to see if they were practical. There was a grave danger if such speculation was allowed to continue without proper examination of what was practical. The Prime Minister noted that the work of the Forum was still in progress but that the kind of language used in the Weekend World programme was not helpful. The Taoiseach thought it extremely unhelpful. It was premature to raise such questions when they had not been discussed between the Republic and the United Kingdom. That the programme had attributed proposals to him personally was a setback. Indeed Mary Holland had thought it necessary to dissociate herself from the programme, considering it too distorted.

The Taoiseach said that he thought that both sides needed to reflect carefully how to cope with alienation of the minority community in Northern Ireland. For their part the Irish Government would have to see how the Forum went. Discussion there concentrated on the rights of the unionists as well as on the rights of the minority. He hoped that this would result in a wide degree of consensus on future long term structures which would go far beyond the traditional nationalist approach of a unitary state into which the unionists would have to fit. The process was going well though that did not mean that all would agree with the conclusions at the end. The Forum had developed its own dynamic and was generating new thinking. One problem was that few politicians in southern Ireland knew anything about the north. The Forum's method of working had been designed to reduce disagreement. It was the function of the Chairman after discussion to put forward what he thought might be an agreed analysis or an account of the different ideas held by the various sides. If necessary he could record differences of view. This device should exclude separate minority reports. It remained to be seen how much dissent there would be. The way in to the discussion had been a basic document, a partly correct version of which had been leaked to the press, which set out the basic questions both about nationalism and about unionist that the Irish needed to ask themselves. Having agreed the questions, they would try to go forward from there.

But much diplomacy was needed. He saw it as the Irish Government's duty to make sure that the analysis was as fundamental as possible but also to make it easier for the opposition to come along with them. This was why they were bending over backwards to avoid contention. The Prime Minister said that she would be interested to see the outcome.

Turning to the communique, the Prime Minister said that the text as amended following their discussion seemed acceptable. The Taoiseach agreed but thought it desirable that the communique should mention their next meeting though he had no wish to be specific. The Prime Minister preferred not to fix a date now. They would be meeting in Athens and elsewhere. To announce a date would give rise to problems if for any reason it proved impossible to keep. She thought that June and July next year would be very difficult for her because of the heavy press of business. Mr. Barry pointed out that the Irish Presidency started in July; the Taoiseach said that he thought that September would be rather late. The Prime Minister said that she would not wish to say so in the communique but thought they might plan for a meeting in the middle of next year. But it was important not to announce it. If there were an increase of violence beforehand they would be blamed. The Taoiseach said that he much regretted that news of their present meeting had become public in advance. He hoped that next time the Prime Minister would come to Dublin. The Prime Minister said that the security arrangements necessary for a meeting at Dublin Castle created an uncomfortable atmosphere. The Taoiseach had said that security would be easier if there was no advance announcement of the date. Mr. Barry said that there would need to be a meeting fairly soon after the Forum had reported in order to discuss its conclusions. The Prime Minister agreed that it would be appropriate to plan on having the next meeting around the middle of 1984. The Taoiseach said that the tradition established between them of saying nothing about their discussion of Northern Ireland issues seemed to him a good one. The Prime Minister agreed

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The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach discussed the situation in Northern Ireland.

They expressed their deep concern about continuing violence and their joint determination to defeat terrorism.

With regard to other matters the Taoiseach explained that while the Forum was continuing its deliberations he had no specific proposals to put forward.

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The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach discussed the situation in Northern Ireland.

They expressed their deep concern about continuing violence and their joint determination to take all possible measures to end it.

[With regard to other matters the Taoiseach and Prime Minister exchanged views.]

The Taoiseach briefed the Prime Minister in relation to the work of the Forum.

RECORD OF PLENARY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER
AND THE IRISH PRIME MINISTER, AN TAOISEACH, HELD AT
CHEQUERS ON MONDAY 7 NOVEMBER 1983

Present:

The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher MP	An Taoiseach, Dr Garret FitzGerald TD
The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP	
The Rt Hon James Prior MP	An Tánaiste, Mr Dick Spring TD
Sir Robert Armstrong	Mr Peter Barry TD
Sir Philip Woodfield	Mr Noel Dorr
Sir Julian Bullard	Mr Dermot Nally
Sir Ewart Bell	Mr Sean Donlon
Mr A C Goodison	Mr Paul Dempsey
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1. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach took note of the Steering Committee's Joint Report. At the Prime Minister's invitation, Sir Geoffrey Howe gave a summary account of the discussions which the Ministers had had immediately before the plenary meeting. The Ministers had considered European Community questions in the context of the coming Athens Summit. They had agreed that it was necessary for the Summit to reach conclusions on the agenda and that the consequences of a failure to reach agreement would be very serious. The budgetary

question was seen as a key issue and the UK ideas for a safety net had been discussed. Mr Barry had referred to the German proposals on future financing and said that it was possible that these would recommend themselves to the Irish. He and Mr Prior had said that they would not go far enough. The Ministers had agreed that discussion of the CAP at Athens would be most important. Mr Barry had stressed the importance of milk for Irish agriculture but had recognised that the surplus could not go on rising. There was agreement that price control was necessary, though he thought that a difference of view would have emerged between the two sides if this question had been pressed further than it was. The Irish side had expressed their extreme concern at the prospect of a super-levy on milk production.

2. The Irish side had raised the Commission's proposal for treating the island of Ireland as a single region for the purpose of the sheepmeat regime, and expressed concern at the letter which Mr Jopling had written opposing this. The UK side had explained their wish to avoid problems of a political sort. Both sides had taken note that the proposal had been withdrawn and that the existing arrangements were to continue for the next two years. Mr Prior had undertaken to examine the question further.

3. Sir G Howe continued that Mr Spring had raised the question of possible radioactive pollution originating at Windscale. Both sides recognised that this was a cause

for genuine anxiety and had undertaken to keep in touch.

4. The Ministers had also touched on international issues and noted that it was important that a democratic government should now be seen to emerge in Grenada. He had himself mentioned the importance of the Irish vote in the General Assembly on the Falklands issue.

5. Mr Barry said that the Ministers had also discussed "new policies" and stressed the importance of these for the development of the Community. The Community must give the impression of planning for employment.

Sir G Howe said that lead-free petrol and air transport had been touched on in this connection.

6. The Prime Minister asked the Taoiseach how he saw the Community developing. She was concerned that ~~the~~ ^{current negotiations} ~~discussions~~ had not yet proceeded far enough. The important issues must be settled at Athens.

The Taoiseach said that he had been worried ten days before but had noted the unexpectedly sudden agreement on the Mediterranean acquis. He was not sure what conclusion to draw from that. It could be an indication that the French thought that it might be better to make progress at Athens so that they did not come under pressure to make progress during their Presidency. The nearer the European elections came the less attraction there would be for Paris in solving agricultural problems. And the Germans were unwilling to agree to additional own resources without acceptance of

enlargement, but for others enlargement created problems. The Prime Minister said that she had found the French position much stronger than she had expected. President Mitterrand saw the European elections as likely to be the expression of a verdict on his period in office so far. ^{He said that} The nearer the elections came the harder it would be for him to make compromises. The French therefore wanted problems sorted out at Athens or deferred until after the European elections. Sir G Howe said that much was now coming to the boil and he was sure that it was right to suppose that the French perceived the need for greater urgency. The UK side had found Mr Papandreou also anxious that the main outstanding problems should be settled at Athens. Unless they were solved there would be increasing disorder within the Community and Community leaders would become a laughing stock for the electorate. The Prime Minister said that when Mr Papandreou was in London it had seemed that he had no detailed ideas for an approach to a solution. He thought there would have to be a grand compromise at Athens. But the issues were so important that unless the main work was done beforehand there was no hope of a compromise at Athens. Mr Barry interjected that in practice the Foreign Ministers had five days to do what was necessary before Athens. The Taoiseach said that he had had rather a different impression talking to Mr Papandreou and Mr Varfis. They thought that they had worked out a way of identifying the problems and of providing a framework for discussion. He hoped that they would produce this. Sir G Howe said he thought that the Taoiseach's impression was correct. The

question was whether the framework which the Greeks had in mind was the right one. Mr Papandreou might be looking for a compromise, which would not solve the problem. But Mr Papandreou had said that he recognised that any solution would have to get ten votes. The Prime Minister thought that Mr Papandreou was listening to all his partners now and hoped to formulate a grand view which would emerge at Athens. But the general lines of the solution were needed before then. The Taoiseach commented that any framework would contain unsatisfactory elements but he was a little more optimistic than he had been. Sir G Howe said that he too was optimistic that what needed to be done could be done if all concentrated on obtaining a solution at Athens. The Taoiseach said that it was likely that one or two problems would remain which could only be settled at Athens. The Prime Minister noted that there were points on which the UK side could not compromise. The Taoiseach said that the Irish recognised the British problem. But milk was much larger in terms of impact on GNP for the Irish. There had to be a solution which did not freeze the position left in Ireland by the long relationship of dependency on Great Britain. The single issue offsetting the industrial disadvantages to Ireland of Community membership was the possibility of recovering from that earlier situation. Freezing of their milk industry would create an unacceptable situation. That said, he recognised that it was not possible to go on producing milk at the present rate as a community.

7. The Prime Minister said that she was aware of the Irish problem. She understood that the Spanish would require a definitive statement on enlargement following the Athens Summit. They had delayed their referendum on membership of NATO to enable them, she thought, to link the two issues in the electorate's mind. The Taoiseach said that if the French were able to agree to the principle of enlargement and fix a date for concluding the negotiations, even a long way ahead, that would help both the Germans and the Spaniards, who wanted to see early progress in the enlargement negotiations; though he could imagine that the French would not wish to do that before the European election. The Prime Minister thought much depended on the length of the transitional period. People were talking in terms of very long periods. Everyone agreed that it would be good from the general political point of view to have Spain and Portugal within the Community. That said, enlargement raised difficult problems. The southern states would want some sort of arrangements for agriculture comparable to those in the north. The Taoiseach said that he was surprised that the Mediterranean acquis had been agreed. He shared the Prime Minister's concern about Spain and Portugal. He was also concerned about the question of increasing own resources. For his part he was prepared to accept the increased cost of enlargement but he would be unhappy if the limitation on own resources implied that there were insufficient resources to maintain the existing CAP albeit reformed. If the additional costs arising from enlargement and from new policies and from the commitment

to double the size of the Regional Fund were taken into account, by 1986 1.2% or 1.25% own resources would be necessary as a starter; this might need to rise to 1.4% later. If the Commission's proposals for modifying this figure through the European Parliament were not accepted but the need for reference to all twelve Parliaments retained, the Community would find itself facing further rows every two or three years. The Prime Minister said she found the prospect of 1.4% horrific for a net contributor. She thought that it might not be necessary: VAT and levies were buoyant and should increase as Europe came out of the recession. As a net contributor the UK would look with great hostility at any increase. The Taoiseach suggested that, even making stringent assumptions about the CAP, Europe would be faced with a very serious problem. The Prime Minister said that without serious restraint there would be rows every year. Sir G Howe said that the sensitivity in the UK Parliament on the question of an increase in own resources was now very great. It would only be possible to carry Parliament if there was a satisfactory conclusion on the UK budget share and on the CAP. The Commission's proposal that modification should be decided by the European Parliament would break the camel's back not with a straw but a log.

8. The Taoiseach said that he thought that the UK and the Republic would find themselves on different sides on the way which the CAP was to be limited. This was something which would have to be fought out at Athens. He asked the Prime Minister whether UK thinking on EMS

had evolved. The Prime Minister said that it had not yet done so. There had been times when the UK had been glad not to be tied to the Deutschmark. She wondered what currency would be devalued next. Would it be the French? When there was a devaluation the EMS needed someone from outside to take the chair. The horse-trading at previous devaluations had been quite horrifying. The time had not yet arrived for UK entry. One problem was that any change in the world energy position moved the rate for the pound up and down very sharply.

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10. The Prime Minister asked how the Irish saw the Lebanese situation and in particular the question of UNIFIL. Mr Barry said that he thought that UNIFIL was performing a useful function in Lebanon even though it was not the function which they had been sent to carry out in the first place. The Irish were not hopeful of anything very favourable emerging from Geneva but they had sent out a new battalion only the previous week. The Irish had not been asked by the Syrians to take part as observers and thought this just as well. The Prime Minister noted that there were no observers in position yet. She had understood from Mr Papandreou that no

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observers would go in until there was an agreement on political reconciliation. Sir G Howe said that there was a general point which ought to be stressed. There were now more than 10,000 troops in the Lebanon from outside the Middle East. This represented the price which had to be paid for failure to reach agreement on the ground. Foreign troops could not stay indefinitely. Nor were they deployed in the most rational place. It was important that the reconciliation talks should get on. But he was uncertain whether the Syrians in fact wanted a settlement. It was necessary to work towards the withdrawal of all foreign troops.

11. The Taoiseach said that he had noted in the press the suggestion that the United States might retaliate for the bombing of their headquarters in Lebanon. This was clearly a source for concern. He asked if the UK side thought it likely to happen. Sir G Howe said that the UK side was also concerned. Retaliation was not the right policy. Firm action against identified groups who had initiated attacks was justified but broader retaliatory action could not be wise. The Taoiseach said he thought such action would be dangerous for those concerned. The Lebanon was not an area in which it was wise to get more deeply involved. He noted that there did not seem total cohesion of the Multi-national Force. The Prime Minister pointed out that the different national components of the force had different rules of engagement. The Taoiseach noted that in the case of UNIFIL the Irish rules of engagement differed from those of other contributors.

Mr Donlon said that the Irish had lost in all 29 men in the connection with UNIFIL. Mr Dorr said that half of these had been killed in hostile engagements and half had died from traffic accidents and so on. The Prime Minister said that Lebanon was a unique problem. It was now complicated by the fighting in Tripoli. The terms of reference of the Multi-National Force related to Beirut only, though clearly if they were attacked from outside Beirut they might have to reply simply as a matter of self-defence. The UK's contribution was purely symbolic. There were ~~only 100~~ ^{only a hundred hundred or so} men. They did not normally guard a fixed point (although they were guarding the security talks) but carried out patrols. She thought all concerned were aware that they were up against something which had been unexpected in the form of suicide attacks. Guerillas always had the advantage of the element of surprise. Self-defence was certainly warranted for all members of the MNF but what that entitled them to do was not always clear. The Taoiseach said that he was not happy about the position of Irish forces in UNIFIL in Southern Lebanon. They were surrounded by the Israelis. At the moment their only useful function was that they gave refugees who had returned to their homes in the area a sense of security. But the possible effect of withdrawing the Irish contingent was a matter of concern.

12. Turning to Northern Ireland Mr Prior said that the Ministers' conversation which had no doubt covered the same ground as the conversation between the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister. Both sides were deeply concerned at

the continuing violence in Northern Ireland and at the reduction in support for constitutional nationalists. They were concerned at the growth of support for the Provisional Sinn Fein and at the alienation of Catholics from constitutional government. He expressed concern that journalists - and he had in mind in particular the Weekend World programme broadcast the day before - had raised issues which had not been discussed between the two sides in any depth nor worked through by anyone to see if they were practical. There was a grave danger if such speculation was allowed to continue without proper examination of what was practical. The Prime Minister noted that the work of the Forum was still in progress but that the kind of language used in the Weekend World programme was not helpful. The Taoiseach thought it extremely unhelpful. It was premature to raise such questions when they had not been discussed between the Republic and the United Kingdom. That the programme had attributed proposals to him personally was a setback. Indeed Mary Holland had thought it necessary to dissociate herself from the programme, considering it too distorted.

13. The Taoiseach said that he thought that both sides needed to reflect carefully how to cope with alienation of the minority community in Northern Ireland. For their part the Irish Government would have to see how the Forum went. Discussion there concentrated on the rights of the unionists as well as on the rights of the minority. He hoped that this would result in a wide degree of

consensus on future long term structures which would go far beyond the traditional nationalist approach of a unitary state into which the unionists would have to fit. The process was going well though that did not mean that all would agree with the conclusions at the end. The Forum had developed its own dynamic and was generating new thinking. One problem was that few politicians in southern Ireland knew anything about the north. The Forum's method of working had been designed to reduce disagreement. It was the function of the Chairman after discussion to put forward what he thought might be an agreed analysis or an account of the different ideas held by the various sides. If necessary he could record differences of view. This device should exclude separate minority reports. It remained to be seen how much dissent there would be. The way in to the discussion had been a basic document, a partly correct version of which had been leaked to the press, which set out the basic questions both about nationalism and about unionist that the Irish needed to ask themselves. Having agreed the questions, they would try to go forward from there. But much diplomacy was needed. He saw it as the Irish Government's duty to make sure that the analysis was as fundamental as possible but also to make it easier for the opposition to come along with them. This was why they were bending over backwards to avoid contention. The Prime Minister said that she would be interested to see the outcome.


15. Turning to the communiqué, the Prime Minister said

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that the text as amended following their discussion seemed acceptable. The Taoiseach agreed but thought it desirable that the communiqué should mention their ~~next~~ meeting ~~again~~ though he had no wish to be specific. The Prime Minister preferred not to fix a date now. They would be meeting in Athens and elsewhere. To announce a date would give rise to problems if for any reason it proved impossible to keep. She thought that June and July next year would be very difficult for her because of the heavy press of business. Mr Barry pointed out that the Irish Presidency started in July; the Taoiseach said that he thought that September would be rather late. The Prime Minister said that she would not wish to say so in the communiqué but thought they might plan for a meeting in the middle of next year. But it was important not to announce it. If there were an increase of violence beforehand they would be blamed. The Taoiseach said that he much regretted that news of their present meeting had become public in advance. He hoped that next time the Prime Minister would come to Dublin. The Prime Minister said that ~~going into Dublin Castle in one of three helicopters had made her feel criminal.~~ *the security arrangements necessary for a meeting at Dublin Castle created an uncomfortable atmosphere.*

The Taoiseach had said that security would be easier if there was no advance announcement of the date. Mr Barry said that there would need to be a meeting fairly soon after the Forum had reported in order to discuss its conclusions. The Prime Minister agreed that it would be appropriate to plan on having the next meeting around the middle of 1984. The Taoiseach said that the tradition established between them of saying nothing about their

discussion of Northern Ireland issues seemed to him a good one. The Prime Minister agreed.

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COVERING CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 November, 1983

Dear John,

AS → 15.
" "

Anglo-Irish Summit Meeting, 7 November 1983: Records

/ I enclose a draft record of the plenary discussion which the Prime Minister had with the Taoiseach at Chequers on 7 November. I should be grateful to know if you are content that it should be distributed to members of the Cabinet official Committee on Anglo-Irish Relations (AI). We have meanwhile sent a telegram to Dublin, copied to EC Posts summarising the EC element in the Prime Minister's and Sir G Howe's discussions with the Irish (copy enclosed). /

A record of the meeting which the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had with Mr Spring and Mr Barry has been prepared. If you wished to see this before distribution, I shall send it for you as soon as we hear from the Northern Ireland Office that Mr Prior is content with it.

I am copying this letter with enclosures, to John Lyon at the Northern Ireland Office and Richard Hatfield at the Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely
P F Ricketts

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 1AA





10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 November 1983

Dear Peter,

Anglo/Irish Summit: Records

Thank you for your letter of 14 November. We shall distribute the plenary record to the Private Offices of those Ministers who were present. I have no objection to you distributing it further to members of the Cabinet official Committee on Anglo/Irish relations.

It is kind of you to offer to let me see before distribution the record of the meeting which the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had with Mr. Spring and Mr. Barry. In view of the sensitivity of some matters which were discussed at the Summit I should like on this occasion, exceptionally, to take advantage of your offer.

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

A. L. COLES

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

PR



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 November 1983

Anglo-Irish Summit

I enclose the record of the plenary session held at Chequers on 7 November.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to John Lyon (Northern Ireland Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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