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Foreign and Commonwealth Office 10 Downing Street

London SW1A 2AH

18 March 1983

CABINET OFFICE  
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FILING INSTRUCTIONS  
FILE No.

Dear John,

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

I enclose short briefs for the Prime Minister's meeting with Dr Garret FitzGerald in the margins of next week's European Council, covering Anglo-Irish relations, Northern Ireland, and the European Parliament and Northern Ireland. The briefs were prepared in the FCO and NIO and have, where appropriate, been seen in draft by the Cabinet Office. A scene-setting telegram from Dublin and a personality note on Dr FitzGerald are also enclosed together with a draft press statement which, if you agree, you could put to Dr FitzGerald's Private Secretary after the meeting. No separate briefing on Community issues has been provided but the Prime Minister will no doubt wish to raise the budget with Dr FitzGerald.

As you know the meeting is expected to last about 45 minutes. It will be informal and we do not expect Dr FitzGerald to have any specific issue to discuss. The Prime Minister will not be expected to make any definite response to the Irish Government's proposal for a forum for discussions on a 'New Ireland'. Our main objectives remain to encourage Dr FitzGerald in his moderate low key approach and to persuade him to say as little as possible about Northern Ireland in the coming months.

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

Yours ever  
John Holmes

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL : BRUSSELS : 21/22 MARCH

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND DR GARRET FITZGERALD

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

UK Objectives

1. To encourage Dr FitzGerald in his moderate low key approach, and to persuade him to say as little as possible about Northern Ireland in the coming months.

Points to Make

2. Happy to see Anglo-Irish relations put back on a sensible footing after deterioration during Mr Haughey's administration. This best taken forward steadily and deliberately. Important to avoid any impression of secrecy or of conniving behind the backs of Northern Ireland politicians.

3. Appreciate pressures which caused you to issue statement on Forum for a 'new Ireland' on 11 March. It is of course open to Irish political parties and Northern Ireland parties who may wish to participate to exchange views on long term future of the island. But this cannot affect fundamental position that Northern Ireland is and will remain part of the United Kingdom while majority of its people so wish. Northern Ireland a particularly difficult issue in run up to general election - the less said and done, the better.

Possibility of Anglo-Irish Summit (if raised)

4. Prepared to consider a summit in principle later on, provided excessive expectations of what it might achieve can be kept in check and provided UK domestic political considerations allow.

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Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Body (if raised)

5. Establishment of Parliamentary Body a matter for the two Parliaments. Unrealistic to expect progress before general election.

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council (if raised)

6. Business as usual as far as we are concerned. But AIIC overshadowed by other developments of late. Unwise to lay too much stress on the Council for the moment.

Encounter Organisation (if raised)

7. Understand matters rest with UK position paper given to Mr Nally in January 1982. Await your comments with interest.

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL : BRUSSELS : 21/22 MARCH

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND DR GARRET FITZGERALD

ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

Background

1. Shortly after his return to power in December last year Dr FitzGerald made it clear that his Government would work for better relations with the UK and proposed to set about this in a steady and deliberate way. The Prime Minister agreed in January that it would be right to let contacts between British and Irish Ministers resume but to take matters along as slowly and deliberately as possible, leaving it to the Irish to make the running. Since then the Foreign and Commonwealth and Northern Ireland Secretaries have had separate meetings with the Irish Foreign Minister. These discussions were quite general and the Irish put forward no detailed proposals, eg over Northern Ireland.

2. The Irish recognise that little movement can be expected from us over Northern Ireland before the general election. Dr FitzGerald told HM Ambassador Dublin on 6 March that he would have nothing specific to discuss with the Prime Minister at the European Council. The situation has since been altered by the Irish Government's statement on a Forum for a new Ireland (attached), which seems to have been issued in some haste on 11 March in order to forestall pressure from Fianna Fail to establish a Council for a New Ireland as proposed by the SDLP which would not have involved the Northern Ireland Unionist parties. But on 11 March the Secretary of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs led HM Ambassador Dublin to believe that the Irish would not be looking to us to do anything in particular in

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response to the initiative; and during a radio interview on 13 March Dr FitzGerald accepted that any change in the constitutional position of Northern Ireland could only come about with the consent of a majority in Northern Ireland. All Irish parties will probably participate in the Forum but are likely to find it difficult if not impossible to reach agreement. Unionists have condemned it.

3. Given Dr FitzGerald's wish to use the meeting to get to know the Prime Minister and to discuss the generality of Anglo-Irish relations it seems unlikely that he will raise specific issues such as the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council. Defensive talking points have, however, been provided on these subjects, background to which is given below.

#### Possible Anglo-Irish Summit Meeting

4. 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. Since their election the Irish Government have on balance been relatively helpful over Northern Ireland and a flat refusal could endanger this approach. The Prime Minister might therefore wish to agree in principle to a summit in due course provided that excessive expectations about what it might achieve can be kept in check and if UK domestic political considerations then allow.

#### Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Body

5. The Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Body is the most substantial of the issues remaining from the Joint Studies and the November 1981 Summit. The signs are that the Irish Government have given the establishment of the Body a low priority but if Dr FitzGerald

raises the subject the Prime Minister might remind him that the establishment of the Parliamentary Body is a matter for Parliament and the Dáil, and that it would be unrealistic to expect any progress soon.

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council

6. With the marked coolness in Anglo-Irish relations during the Haughey administration the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council has had little chance to develop. There have, however, been a good number of meetings of the Council at junior Ministerial level mainly to discuss technical matters of benefit to Northern Ireland such as the Kinsale Gas project. The Prime Minister has agreed that such meetings should continue but otherwise it seems right not to lay too much stress on the Council for the moment.

Encounter Organisation

7. The Anglo-Irish Joint Studies envisaged the eventual creation of an Advisory Council on economic, social and cultural cooperation, with the establishment of an Encounter Organisation (modelled on the Anglo-German Society's Koenigswinter conferences) as an interim measure. At a meeting with the Secretary of the Irish Government in January 1982, Sir Robert Armstrong presented a paper setting out the UK view of the Organisation's development. There has not yet been any response from the Irish to this although at his meeting with Mr Prior on 1 February the Irish Foreign Minister undertook to look again at the UK paper.

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IRISH GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

1. The Government propose to arrange, in agreement with the political parties concerned, for the establishment of a forum for consultations on the manner in which lasting peace and stability can be achieved in a new Ireland through the democratic process.

2. Participation will be open to all democratic parties which reject violence, and which have members elected or appointed to the Oireachtas or the Northern Ireland Assembly.

3. The views of other people of all traditions who agree with the purpose of these consultations and who reject violence will also be sought by the forum.

4. It would be the intention that the forum will report before the end of the year on possible new structures and processes through which its objectives might be achieved.

5. The Taoiseach will arrange a meeting of leaders of all the parties who wish to participate at an early date to discuss the arrangements involved.

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL : BRUSSELS : 21/22 MARCH

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND DR GARRET FITZGERALD

NORTHERN IRELAND

UK Objectives

1. To encourage Dr FitzGerald not to criticise or undermine the Assembly, or to challenge the UK Government's policy towards it, and to maintain a low public profile on Northern Ireland in the coming months.

Points to Make

2. Regret SDLP abstention from Assembly. Hope they will change their minds. They have nothing to lose by participation as there will be no devolution without cross-community support; and they would gain opportunities to represent constituents' interests, to influence social and economic policy, and generally to strengthen the development of normal political processes in Northern Ireland.

3. Mr Prior and Ministers nevertheless always willing to meet SDLP and, where possible, take account of their views. It remains our view that better relations between the UK and the Republic can help ease the dangerous sense of isolation of the minority community in Northern Ireland.

4. Sinn Fein on the other hand is not a constitutional party and we refuse to discuss anything other than minor, purely constituency matters with them.

5. Value excellent cross-border cooperation between RUC and

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Garda. Hope recent senior Garda appointments (Commissioner Wren, Deputy Commissioner McMahon, Assistant Commissioner Fanning) will sustain this.

6. Fugitive offenders best dealt with by extradition. Hope we can build on McGlinchey judgement. Extra-territorial jurisdiction a second best.

7. Grateful for firm stand taken by Irish Government over NORAID involvement in New York St Patrick's Day Parade.

8. (Defensive). Hope we can reach agreement on sale of Kinsale Gas to Northern Ireland. But this can only be on terms which give prospect of financially viable gas industry there. Understand Mr Butler is pursuing this with Mr Bruton (Irish Minister).

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL : BRUSSELS : 21/22 MARCH

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND DR GARRET FITZGERALD

NORTHERN IRELAND

Background

1. The Irish coalition parties have never ruled out support for devolved government in Northern Ireland, though they think HMG should insist on power-sharing. A restatement of the need for cross-community support before devolution might encourage them (and through them the SDLP) to reassess the Assembly.

Security

2. Professional cooperation between police forces remains productive and we are grateful though it is thought best not to say so in public. Effective relationship depends largely on personalities and we are watching the performance of recent senior Garda appointees with interest.

3. Irish often argue that existing extra-territorial legislation is sufficient to deal with fugitive offenders. This underestimates the symbolic importance of extradition and the likely beneficial longer term effects. A recent Irish Supreme Court ruling (the McGlinchey judgement) seems to undermine the Irish courts traditional reluctance to extradite so-called 'political' offenders. We are studying cases to test the judgement and the Irish Attorney-General met Sir M Havers on 15 March to discuss suitable cases. (Dr FitzGerald has toyed with the idea of an all-Ireland court (the 1974 Anglo-Irish Law Enforcement Commission said it merited further study), but is unlikely to raise the subject now.)

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St Patrick's Day in the USA

4. Election of NORAID leader Michael Flannery as Grand Marshal of New York St Patrick's Day Parade led Irish Government to boycott it and lobby senior Irish-Americans to follow suit. Many did so.

Kinsale Gas

5. Ministers approved (end-1982) the project for a gas industry in Northern Ireland based on natural gas from Kinsale if acceptable terms could be agreed with the Irish Government. The fall in the £/\$ exchange rate has caused serious problems: the Irish want Northern Ireland to bear the full cost of exchange rate movements but this would mean that the financial viability criteria could not be met and there is now a distinct possibility that no mutually acceptable deal is possible. Negotiations continue. If they fail it will be important to ensure that both sides withdraw amicably and without public rancour.

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL : BRUSSELS : 21/22 MARCH

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND DR GARRET FITZGERALD

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND NORTHERN IRELAND

UK Objective

1. To ensure that the Irish Government continue to make the minimum of public comment about the European Parliament's decision to commission a report on Northern Ireland.

Points to Make

2. We welcome the Community's role in helping to tackle the economic and social problems of Northern Ireland. But the Political Affairs Committee's report will not solve Northern Ireland's problems; and the European Parliament has no business interfering in our internal political affairs.

3. We would have much preferred there to be no report. We will continue to do what we can to prevent ill-judged excursions into internal political affairs. Best interests of the Republic, Britain and above all Northern Ireland served by avoiding unnecessary controversy. Grateful that you have kept public comment to a minimum. Hope you can continue to do so.

4. [If Dr FitzGerald argues that EC involvement could help].  
The Community can indeed help if it sticks to its business. Social and economic progress will alleviate the political difficulties. But the last thing Northern Ireland needs is another political kibitzer.

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL : BRUSSELS : 21/22 MARCH

MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND DR GARRET FITZGERALD

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Background

1. On 9 March the Bureau of the European Parliament confirmed an earlier decision by the Political Affairs Committee to produce a report on Northern Ireland. The Report will be based on (but not bound by the terms of) four Resolutions, three of which call for Community assistance in solving the problems of Northern Ireland while the fourth (Reverend Ian Paisley/Mr John Taylor) 'reaffirms that the European Community has no competence to make proposals on the constitutional and political affairs of Northern Ireland'.

2. Mr Haagerup, a Danish Liberal, was appointed rapporteur on 15 March. His press statement was helpful from our point of view:

a. He said he would visit Dublin and London 'in the normal course of other business', but had no immediate plans to visit Northern Ireland;

b. Asked if he would meet Sinn Fein, he said he would be reluctant to talk to those responsible for violence.

3. Neither the timing nor the likely content of the report are yet clear, but in general we expect Haagerup to continue to be sensitive to British concerns.

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4. The Government of the Republic of Ireland has made little public comment, which is helpful. At the Political Cooperation Meeting in Bonn on 1 March, however, the Foreign Minister, Mr Barry, said the proposed report was not out of line with the policy of Dublin.

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