S E C R E T

5

PRIME MINISTER

MT.

ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT: 7 NOVEMBER: CHEQUERS

It would be helpful if you could decide on the following points:

(a) Who should participate on our side?

You will presumably be accompanied by the Foreign Secretary and the Northern Ireland Secretary. In order to avoid the impression that the Summit is devoted entirely to Northern Ireland and constitutional issues, would you like to have another Minister from one of the economic departments with you? There is little on the agenda to justify it, but would you, for example, wish to ask the Chancellor to join the Summit? No - a waste of his time. I agree.

Leon (?) and/or Leigh.

(b) Are you content with the attached outline programme?

The FCO say that the Irish might complain that the time for discussion is limited. They accordingly suggest that we should say to the Irish that you would not mind the plenary session continuing after lunch if necessary. It looks to me, however, as though there is plenty of time for discussion. I believe we should tell the Irish that discussion could continue during lunch if necessary and not commit you to further meetings in the afternoon. Agree? Yes

(c) A press conference

The choice is between a joint press conference and independent briefing by both sides. I suggest that you defer a decision until nearer the time. If we commit ourselves to a joint press conference now, we may regret it in the event. Agree? Yes MT

A. J. C.

5 October 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 October 1983

Dear John,

Anglo-Irish Summit: Chequers

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Cabinet Office earlier this year, I am writing to make proposals both on Ministerial participation and on the programme for the Summit (we delayed putting these forward in order to take account of any developments at the Official Co-ordinating Committee of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council in Dublin on 28 September).

The question of Ministerial participation at the Summit was discussed between Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr Nally, Secretary to the Irish Government, at their meeting on 11 July. Sir Robert told Mr Nally that the Prime Minister would probably be accompanied by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Mr Nally said that Dr FitzGerald would be accompanied by the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr Barry, and possibly by Mr Spring, the Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister). It is likely in practice that Mr Spring will insist on coming, since it would be politically embarrassing for the leader of the Labour Party, the junior partner in the Irish coalition government, to be excluded from an Anglo-Irish Summit. Both sides accept that the main purpose of the Summit will be to provide public evidence of the normalisation of Anglo-Irish relations. And there are no major bilateral issues which entail any additional Ministerial presence on the British side (although Kinsale gas might be a possible agenda item). On the other hand, the presence of other ministers, eg on the economic side, could help to prevent any public or Irish Government impression that the Summit was entirely devoted to Northern Ireland and constitutional issues. The Foreign Secretary recalls attending at least one previous Summit as Chancellor.

/I enclose

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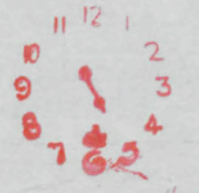

I enclose a draft programme. The Irish may be inclined to argue that the time for discussion is a little limited. It would accordingly be helpful if we could be authorised to say, in putting the programme to the Irish, that the Prime Minister could contemplate the plenary session being continued after lunch if this proved necessary.

I should be grateful for your advice on press conferences. The choice in practice is between a joint press conference or no press conference. Simultaneous press conferences would be a nonsense and there are great dangers in consecutive conferences. A joint press conference is also a little risky, as well as a tiresome chore, but is probably the best option since if there is no formal press conference at all Dr FitzGerald will undoubtedly brief the press in London on his own terms.

I am copying this letter to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

OUTLINE PROGRAMME FOR THE ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT MEETING

0950	Participants arrive at Chequers (assume that Irish party will arrive previous night and travel up from London by car)
1000-1045	Tête-a-tête. Other Ministerial participants to meet in separate room, together with officials.
1045	Coffee
1100-1245	Plenary session.
1300-1430	Lunch
1435	Depart for RAF Halton
1450	Press conference in Officers' Mess at RAF Halton.
1530	Depart for RAF Benson.
1615	Irish party depart from RAF Benson.

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Could I possibly have your decision on the attached point.

AR 6/10.

SECRET

BF 6

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 October 1983

ANGLO/IRISH SUMMIT

Thank you for your letter of 4 October.

The Prime Minister would be grateful if the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would accompany her at the above summit.

She doubts whether it would be a good use of the time of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for him to be present. Mrs. Thatcher has asked whether the subject matter would be likely to justify the presence of the Home Secretary or the Trade Secretary. I should be grateful for your advice.

The Prime Minister is broadly content with the outline programme which you enclosed. She would, however, not wish you to give the Irish the impression that the plenary session could be continued after lunch. The time for discussion seems to be relatively generous and it could continue during the working lunch if necessary.

With regard to a press conference, the Prime Minister will take a decision on this nearer the time. She would certainly not wish to commit herself now to a joint press conference.

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

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SECRET

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 October 1983

Dear John,

Anglo-Irish Summit

Thank you for your letter of 7 October.

We have given thought to the Prime Minister's question about inviting the Home Secretary and the Trade and Industry Secretary to attend the Summit meeting, in consultation with the Home Office and the Department of Trade, as well as the Cabinet Office and the Northern Ireland Office. The presence of either Minister would help to prevent any public impression that the Summit was devoted to Northern Ireland and constitutional issues. But we have now established that there are no points which the Home Office or the Department of Trade wish to pursue with the Irish at Ministerial level, and the presence of either the Home Secretary or the Trade Secretary might encourage the Irish to add further members to their ministerial team. This in turn could lead to an unnecessary expansion of the agenda. In the case of the Home Secretary, there is also the risk that the Irish might feel obliged to raise matters (such as the transfer of prisoners from British to Northern Ireland jails) which we would prefer not to discuss. The Foreign Secretary is therefore inclined to conclude that, on balance, it would be better not to include Mr Brittan or Mr Tebbit.

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

Yours ever

John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

SECRET

Ireland
Mtg with
Taoiseach
pt 5

20 OCT 1985

SECRET

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

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A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

21 October 1983

A.J.C. 24/10
f.a.

Dear John

ANGLO-IRISH SUMMIT

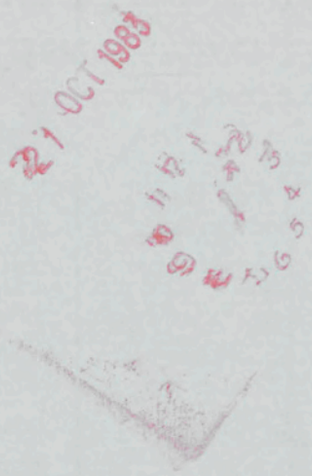
Mr Prior has seen John Holme's letter of 20 October about the Anglo-Irish summit. He very much agrees that it would be unwise to include Mr Brittan and Mr Tebbit in the ministerial team, for the reasons John sets out. / with Agr.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (FCO) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
Derek Hill

D A HILL

SA

SECRET

Ireland: Mtg with Taoiseach. Pt 6