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SUBJECT CO  
MASTER

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LONDON SW1A 2AA

9 December 1989

*From the Private Secretary*

Dear Stephen,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH,  
STRASBOURG, 9 DECEMBER

The Prime Minister had a brief meeting with the Taoiseach following the conclusion of the European Council in Strasbourg today. I enclose a copy of the statement which was agreed and issued at the end of the meeting.

Strasbourg Council

The Taoiseach said that the Prime Minister had been extremely reasonable during the Council. The Prime Minister replied that she was a bit surprised that the Irish had been willing to go along with the Social Charter and the action plan which accompanied it. The Taoiseach agreed that the action plan was where the difficulties would be. The Irish would rely on the subsidiarity principle to avoid some of the measures proposed. Several Member States had been willing to accept the Charter because it had no operational significance. But they would not like the action programme.

Birmingham Six

The Taoiseach said that he "had a lot of public opinion" on the Birmingham Six. He just wanted to mention it. He hoped some formula could be found "to bring this damned thing to an end". The Prime Minister said that the case had been referred to the Court of Appeal, which had delivered a very thorough judgement. There was nothing more she could say.

Security Co-operation

The Prime Minister said there was still room for improvements in security co-operation. The Taoiseach said the Irish continued to do the best they could. He thought the RUC were broadly satisfied.

The Taoiseach said the Irish had some indications of talks among the para-militaries about ceasing violence. These were being conducted in prison between members of the UVF and the IRA. But it could be they were only talking about delimiting their respective territories. The Prime Minister said she had no information on this. The basic problem was that far too many terrorist crimes were still taking place and nobody was being caught for them.

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Anglo-Irish Agreement

The Prime Minister said that the Agreement seemed to be functioning well. The Taoiseach said that it was "perfectly all right". The Prime Minister suggested that the time might have come to have a go at devolution again. The Unionists were showing a little more confidence. The Taoiseach said that he had recently met the new Northern Ireland Secretary for the first time. He was clearly a very sincere and fearless person. The Prime Minister said that he had total integrity.

Germany

The Taoiseach said that he was a bit alarmed about some of the things he had heard Chancellor Kohl say over the past couple of days, especially his two long diatribes at dinner the previous evening. There was "a touch of the bulldozer" about Chancellor Kohl.

Irish Presidency

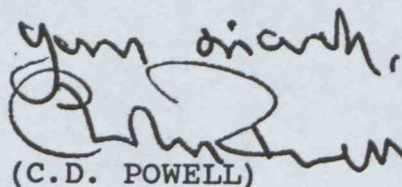
In response to the Prime Minister's question, the Taoiseach said the Irish Presidency would try to pick and choose among proposals in the Commission's action programme stemming from the Social Charter. They would keep closely in touch with us.

The Prime Minister said she hoped the Irish Government would keep up the speed on the single market. They would need to get through another forty or fifty directives.

The Taoiseach asked how the Irish Presidency should take forward the proposed East European Development Bank. There did not seem to him much point in lending to the East European countries. The Prime Minister said that some very thorough work would be needed on the details of the Bank. The basic problem was the lack of good projects to lend to in Eastern Europe.

The Prime Minister said that there would also need to be very careful preparation in ECOFIN for the proposed Inter-Governmental Conference. The Taoiseach said that he took the view that Economic and Monetary Union was a very long way down the road. He had the impression that the Germans were rapidly cooling on it.

I am copying this letter to Stephen Leach (Northern Ireland Office), John Gieve (HM Treasury), Neil Thornton (Department of Trade and Industry) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

  
(C.D. POWELL)

J.S. Wall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The Taoiseach Mr Charles J Haughey and the Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher had a bilateral meeting in Strasbourg on Friday, December 8, 1989 on the occasion of the European Council. [The meeting lasted about half an hour].

During the meeting, they discussed the forthcoming Irish Presidency of the European Community and reviewed some of the major issues which will arise.

They discussed bilateral issues and welcomed the establishment of the Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Group.

They also reviewed the situation in relation to Northern Ireland, and the prospects for political progress. They were agreed in their condemnation of violence, and their determination constantly to strengthen their co-operation against it, as well as the possibilities that would open up if violence were to end.

The meeting was constructive and cordial.

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