Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

It would be easier to meet him further in the company of others. MT

(1)

1 April 1980

Prime Minister
Agree draft telegram?
Mrs 1/4

Dear Michael,

Meeting Between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach

You wrote to me on 26 March about the Prime Minister's reaction to Mr Haughey's approach reported in Dublin telno 116. You will since have seen Roy Harrington's letter of 28 March; and the Home Secretary will be minuting to the Prime Minister recording the outcome of the meeting of MISC 24 on 27 March.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary endorses the view that we should respond positively to Mr Haughey's suggestion of an early meeting with the Prime Minister; and that if a suitable date can be found there would be advantage in holding this before the European Council. This would make it easier for us to present the meeting as primarily concerned with Community issues, especially the budget. Mr Haughey himself has made it clear that he would hope for a wide ranging discussion. We cannot of course expect much support from him on the budget issue at the European Council; but an invitation by the Prime Minister for him to visit London would be helpful in terms of goodwill if nothing else.

No

Lord Carrington agrees that we cannot give Mr Haughey grounds for supposing that we are prepared to concede him any role in determining how Northern Ireland is to be governed. Nor of course can we get involved in any discussion of Irish unity. On the other hand, there are aspects of the Northern Ireland problem which could usefully be discussed with him. This includes security questions of course, but also such issues as the use of European Community funds both to promote cross-border cooperation and to ease Northern Ireland's socio-economic problems. In discussing Anglo/Irish relations there would be no need for us to be unduly on the defensive about Northern Ireland; we might indeed raise with Mr Haughey the unhelpful impact on the North of repeated calls for Irish unity and what the Northern Irish see as the continuing threat represented by Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution.

/Lord Carrington

M O'D B Alexander Esq
No 10 Downing Street

Lord Carrington's view therefore is that while we cannot expect Mr Haughey to agree that there should be no discussion of Northern Ireland, we should be able to avoid the talks extending into areas which would cause trouble with the Unionist community in Northern Ireland. In positive terms, we would hope to convince him, and hence the SDLP, that the latter cannot expect him to get a better deal for them from HMG than they can get themselves in further negotiations with the Northern Ireland Secretary.

The meeting would of course need to be very carefully prepared, especially as regards Press and TV handling,both beforehand and afterwards. But the signs are that Mr Haughey himself is conscious of the need to tread carefully.

... I attach a draft telegram of instructions to Sir R Haydon, which is written on the assumption that the Prime Minister will be able to offer at least one date before the European Council.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Roy Harrington in the Northern Ireland Office.

Yours ever

Paul

(P Lever)

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File No. .....

Department RID

Drafted by (Block Capitals) MJ NEWINGTON

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OUTWARD TELEGRAM

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[TEXT]

YOUR TELNO 116: MEETING BETWEEN THE TAOISEACH AND THE PRIME MINISTER

1. You should speak as follows to the Taoiseach, or if you think it more appropriate, to Nally.

2. The Prime Minister is conscious that the Taoiseach is the only Head of Government of the Nine whom she has not yet met. And she would be happy, if a mutually agreeable date can be found, to arrange a meeting with him before the European Council, now that the latter has been postponed. For security reasons she would prefer, as Mr Haughey suggests, that it be in London.

/ 3.

3. The Prime Minister has a full programme for April, as no doubt has Mr Haughey. But she could manage a meeting on the afternoon of 23 April. ~~or~~ . If these dates are difficult for Mr Haughey it would no doubt be possible for them to meet briefly in the margins of the European Council, though this would not be an occasion for substantive talks, So it might in such circumstances be worth considering in advance of the European Council whether a mutually convenient date could be found early in May.

4. Publicity both before and after a meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach would need to be handled very carefully, not least because of the possible impact on the negotiating process in Northern Ireland. We would hope therefore that there would be no premature leak until we had settled together the line to be taken with the media.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

1 - APR 1980

CONFIDENTIAL

cc HO
NIO
CO.

B

Ireland

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 April 1980

Meeting between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 1 April about the possibility of an invitation being issued to Mr. Haughey for a meeting with the Prime Minister in London later this month. She has also seen the Home Secretary's minute to her of 31 March about the Northern Ireland Conference, which refers to the proposed meeting with Mr. Haughey, and Roy Harrington's letter to me of 28 March.

The Prime Minister, who had a word about the problem with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Home Secretary earlier today, has decided that she would prefer that her first meeting with Mr. Haughey should take place during the European Council. She would prefer, therefore, that no invitation to a bilateral meeting should be issued for the present. The question of a meeting in May can be reviewed in the light of what takes place in Luxembourg.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Chilcot (Home Office), Roy Harrington (Northern Ireland Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

GC

(1)

10 DOWNING STREET

Visit by Mr Haughey.

Prime Minister.

You will see from the attached papers that the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary & the N. Ireland Secretary all favour a meeting (in London) between you & the Taoiseach before the European Council meeting at the end of the month. (They are all aware of your negative reaction to the idea when it was first mooted.)

You could probably offer Mr Haughey lunch or talks in the afternoon on April 23. But you may wish to have a word with Mr Whitelaw & Lord Carrington in the margins of O.D. to-morrow.

(The Home Secretary's minute also deals with other N. Ireland issues)

MCS

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

PRIME MINISTER

The Home Secretary will be minuting you separately; this letter reports Mr Atkins' views of the timetable.

NS

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

28 March 1980

An very doubtful about psychology.

mt.

See also at Flag A Robert Armstrong's views on Mr Haughey's likely approach

Dear Richard,

At their meeting last Wednesday the Prime Minister and my Secretary of State considered briefly the prospects for a meeting between the Prime Minister and Mr Haughey sometime after the postponed European Council; a meeting between my Secretary of State and Mr Lenihan, the Republic's Minister for Foreign Affairs; and the publication of the Government's proposals for the next steps in political development in Northern Ireland. My Secretary of State has been giving further thought to this and it was discussed at MISC 24 on Thursday.

TL 28/3

A meeting between Mr Atkins and Mr Lenihan should be the first of the three. Such a meeting had to be postponed when the Northern Ireland Conference adjourned unexpectedly early just before the Secretary of State's proposed visit to Dublin. A visit then might have awoken fears - however unfounded - of a "secret deal with Dublin". A meeting quite soon after Easter would be less likely to give rise to such fears on the part of the Official Unionists, and we know that the parties attending the Conference do not object to such meetings on matters of mutual interest. There are some specific things, particularly our mutual interest in the electricity inter-connector which terrorists have damaged and which we should like to see repaired and protected, which we need to discuss. We need to keep up the pressure on security co-operation, which in general is going well. We should inform, but not consult, the Irish about the outcome of the Conference.

Second in order, my Secretary of State believes there would be considerable merit in a meeting between the Prime Minister and Mr Haughey, which should probably take place before the Government's document is published. This was discussed specifically at MISC 24 on Thursday and the Home Secretary will be minuting the Prime Minister. From our point of view (but we recognise that there are other important considerations) the purpose of a meeting with Mr Haughey should be to establish in his mind, and get him to establish in John Hume's, the firm conviction that HMG has absolutely no intention of alienating the Unionists by involving Dublin directly in negotiating future arrangements for Northern Ireland, and will bring no pressure to

Don't need to mention to Sec State.

bear on UK citizens in Northern Ireland to change their constitutional status. The result, we hope, would be to encourage John Hume and the SDLP to negotiate constructively in the next stages of the political process, after publication of the Government's proposals for the restoration of some form of devolved government to Northern Ireland.

Publication of these proposals should be the last of the three steps, coming at a respectable interval after any meeting with the Irish Prime Minister. But publication for other reasons is likely to need to be no later than mid or late May, which shows how quickly we must press ahead with the two previous items.

We shall of course approach you nearer the time for the Prime Minister's approval for a visit to Dublin to see Mr Lenihan.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Chilcot, George Walden and David Wright.

Yours ever,

Roy Harrington

R A HARRINGTON

28 MAR 1980

jfh

B/F 8-4-80

26 March 1980

Meeting between the Prime Minister
and the Taoiseach

The Prime Minister has seen Dublin telegram 116 of 21 March to the FCO on this subject. She has indicated that while she would be willing to meet Mr. Haughey in the margin of the European Council it would have to be made clear that she would not be prepared to talk to him about Northern Ireland either in Brussels or at any subsequent meeting in the immediate future.

No doubt you will be sending advice on a considered reply to Mr. Haughey's approach. You will wish to take the Prime Minister's views into account.

Michael Alexander

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.