



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 May 1980

Dear Sir,

VISIT OF THE IRISH PRIME MINISTER

The conversation during the lunch which the Prime Minister gave earlier today for the Irish Prime Minister was almost entirely social. However, three points came up of which you will wish to be aware.

Continental Shelf

Mr. Haughey referred to the prospective commencement of arbitral proceedings to deal with the conflicting claims of the British and the Irish Governments to the waters surrounding Rockall. He said that the proceedings would certainly be long drawn out and would probably result in an agreement to split the disputed area more or less equally between the two countries. He wondered, therefore, whether serious consideration should not be given to the establishment of a joint administration to cover the "grey area" lying between those areas which undisputedly belonged to one party or the other. The Prime Minister did no more than take note of the proposal. Dermot Nally told me afterwards that the idea for a joint administration was a new one which had emerged during the preparations for the visit to London and on which the views of the Irish Government's own experts had not yet been secured. He implied that it was Mr. Haughey's own suggestion.

Presidency of the Commission

This subject was covered in more detail in the course of the plenary discussions later in the afternoon. However, in the brief discussion which took place at lunch, both Mr. Haughey and Mr. Lenihan made it clear that they would oppose the candidature of Mr. Gundelach. Mr. Haughey made the point, which he repeated during the subsequent discussion, that the Irish were prepared to run a candidate against Mr. Gundelach. The reason given for the Irish Government's opposition to Mr. Gundelach was his total unreliability.

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cc last para

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Mr. Haughey spoke very warmly of the support which HMG's representatives in the area had extended to the Irish contingent in the Lebanon.

I am sending copies of this letter to Roy Harrington (Northern Ireland Office), Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence), Garth Waters (MAFF), Ian Ellison (Department of Industry), Bill Burroughs (Department of Energy), Bill Beckett (Law Officers' Department) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever*

*Michael Alexander*

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office.