



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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8.4.1991

Misc.
F. 2.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Northern Ireland

Meeting in Luxembourg between the Taoiseach and the British Prime Minister, Mr. Major

1. The meeting took place at about 8.30 p.m. in the Kirchberg Building where the special European Council was being held. It followed on the press conferences given by the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister and lasted for about 15 minutes. It was attended by Mr. Stephen Wall, Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, and the undersigned. The meeting was very cordial throughout.
2. The Prime Minister opened by saying that this type of meeting, in the margins of European Councils, while useful, did not let the participants get down to any substantial discussion. It would be highly desirable to arrange a meeting sometime in the future where both men would have the opportunity of talking at some length on what was a complicated subject.
3. The Taoiseach replied that that was what he had wanted to say. The Brooke talks might run into the ground at sometime in the future. It would be highly desirable to devise something between the two Governments - some sort of strategy - and he would like the opportunity to come back to the Prime Minister about it. At the same time, if a Summit on Northern Ireland were set up the media would make a big deal of it and give the whole operation a very high profile. What he would suggest therefore is that the meeting should be billed as dealing with European affairs - like economic and monetary union, political union, the IGC's etc.
4. The Prime Minister readily agreed and speculated as to whether the meeting could take place on some European occasion in either Dublin or London.
5. The Taoiseach said that the parties in Northern Ireland must get together and start talking but before they get too far the Prime Minister and he should meet - ostensibly to talk about foreign and security policies and the future of the Community etc., but devoting time to developing a strategy for Northern Ireland.
6. Prime Minister
Thats OK with me. We are going to have to put up with much in the next few months. There will probably be lots of silly statements. Before finalising things, I would like to have a chat with Peter Brooke to see how we can manage it.

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7. Taoiseach

Now that the talks have got this far, the prospects are for either a sort of ding dong exercise, or elevate the whole thing to a new plane, with a new sense of direction. It would be of great benefit if both the British and Irish Governments were to take an overall view and give the talks a direction or sense of strategy.

8. The Prime Minister then went on to ask some unrecorded questions and continued with a reference to the current state of the talks which he said were an opportunity which had been a long time coming and a great pity if it were missed. "Thank you very much for phoning as you did. I greatly appreciated that. It would be a real tragedy if the opportunity slipped"

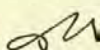
9. Taoiseach

We must talk about the whole process in a wider and longer perspective

10. Prime Minister

The two IGC's provide better than normal cover

11. The two notetakers were then asked to leave the room and the Taoiseach and Prime Minister continued their discussions, alone, for a further 5 minutes or so.
12. [The Prime Minister was using a card of notes during his discussion. I had the illusion at some times during the meeting that somehow, he had got hold of one of our cards and was using it!]



9 April, 1991.

c.c. Secretary Dorr, Department of Foreign Affairs
Assistant Secretary Gallagher, Department of Foreign Affairs