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**Title:** Report by Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs HJ McCann of a meeting with Ambassador of Great Britain to Ireland Hugh Galsworthy regarding a proposed meeting between Fine Gael Leader Liam Cosgrave TD and Prime Minister Edward Heath.

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The British Ambassador telephoned me shortly after 6 p.m. yesterday evening and gave me certain details about the timing of the proposed meeting between Mr. Cosgrave and Mr. Heath. He indicated that he wished to see me later yesterday evening to fill me in on certain details which he did not wish to mention over the telephone.

The Ambassador called on me shortly after 8 p.m. and gave me the following as the contents of a message which he had received from Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary:-

The Prime Minister would be happy to see Mr. Cosgrave on Thursday, 8th March. Because of an important Cabinet meeting and Prime Minister's questions in the House of Commons Mr. Heath would not be free until 4 p.m. but he would be free from 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. At 6.30 p.m. Mr. Heath would have to leave to host something which he cannot avoid but Mr. Cosgrave should return to No. 10 Downing Street for a working dinner at 8 p.m. (dress informal).

Mr. William Whitelaw, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, has to return to Northern Ireland that evening for the closing stages of the Border poll but Sir Alec Douglas-Home will join the Prime Minister and Mr. Cosgrave at dinner.

The Prime Minister would invite Ambassador O'Sullivan to dinner if Mr. Cosgrave so wished and also anyone from Dublin who might be accompanying Mr. Cosgrave e.g. Mr. McCann. The Prime Minister would be glad to know who Mr. Cosgrave has in mind should accompany him.

The Prime Minister had envisaged devoting a whole day to the talks and therefore he was keeping Friday morning free until 12.15 p.m. in case this should be required.

Given the advance in the time-table for the talks the British side cannot now do what was originally planned on prior briefing i.e. some advance information via Ambassador O'Sullivan.

If the above arrangements are acceptable to Mr. Cosgrave the British would like to release the matter to the press at a mutually agreed time. They suggest 11.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 6 March, and they would propose a release in the following terms:-

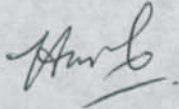
"Mr. Cosgrave will meet the Prime Minister at No. 10 Downing Street on the afternoon of Thursday, 8th March, for talks which may continue on Friday."



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If asked, the British side will say that "Mr. Lynch had originally requested a meeting but the meeting could not take place because of the General Election. Mr. Cosgrave had made known his desire, if elected, to meet the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister had responded through the Irish Government once the Irish election results were known."

The Ambassador added the following personal comments to the message he had relayed to me. He assumed from the message that Mr. Whitelaw was coming over from Northern Ireland specially for the meeting as the message referred to his having to return to the North. He attached significance to the phrase "through the Irish Government" ~~and~~ the proposed supplementary press briefing. He agreed with me that the enforced breaks in the new timing arrangement were not without merit insofar as they would afford Mr. Cosgrave an opportunity for reflection away from the meeting. The Ambassador indicated that if the proposed arrangements were acceptable to Mr. Cosgrave the most immediate question was the clearing of the Press Release for this morning. He indicated that they would, of course, consider any observations we had to make thereon. The Ambassador looks forward to hearing from me early this morning.



6 Márta 1973