

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

IRELAND



Reference Code:	2008/148/709
Creation Date(s):	6 April 1978
Extent and medium:	2 pages
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

Northern Ireland

European Council, Copenhagen.

M. Munnery
1114

Taoiseach,

The British Ambassador called at 9 a.m. this morning, by arrangement, to convey a message which he had been asked to give on behalf of the Prime Minister.

He said that Mr. Callaghan was surprised and disturbed at the way in which the build up for your meeting in Copenhagen was taking. The implications seem to be that the meeting would be a confrontation.

The Prime Ministers understanding was that the meeting would be informal, without photographs and preferably in the context of the European Council. As things were now, the Danish Presidency seem to regard themselves as under an obligation to make arrangements for the meeting. The Danish Ambassador had called at No. 10 Downing Street on the subject yesterday. This was altogether too intense a preparation.

The Ambassador mentioned specifically the press impression that Mr. Callaghan would be "challenged" on security issues. Their campaign against Mason had gone beyond all bounds and the Prime Minister had a certain concern on this subject.

The Ambassador went on to say that from the media/^{one}would conclude that there was a serious crisis in Anglo-Irish relations. Even the Danish press were playing it in this way. His own impression, which he tried to convey to Downing Street was that this was totally wrong. Official contacts continue; relations were friendly; and co-operation within the present arrangements worked as always.

I said that I would convey this message to you. We could not control what the media produced and they were acting on what their knowledge of the facts *was*, including statements by Mr. Mason and others on security issues. I said that in so far as the idea of "confrontation" was concerned, this was not our understanding of the purpose of the meeting. So far as I *knew*, the meeting would attempt to get relations back on the rails again to the point where they had been at your meeting with Mr. Callaghan last September. The arrangements would be informal. We did not know yet where exactly the meeting would take place but our understanding was that it could be arranged either in the British or Irish delegation rooms - which ever happened to be the most convenient. The intervention of the Danish Presidency was unfortunate. We had informed them that you would be meeting

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Mr. Callaghan in the margin of the Council. This was done simply as a matter of courtesy and with no request what so ever for arrangements or intervention by them. This had been confirmed again by us recently. In conclusion, I said again that I did not see any reason why the meeting should not be friendly and constructive - rather than confrontational, as Mr. Callaghan appeared to fear.

W

6th April, 1978.