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1. H. Haughey
S.P. will mention the cordiality of our Affairs, normally to the British ambassador when he calls this afternoon.

P.A. 5.21539
S. 22854
3/9/82
p-2
Mr. Murray
3.9.82

TO: MARTIN MANSERGH. 2. M. Haughey
FROM: TONY FITZPATRICK.

2 SEPTEMBER, 1982.

RE: LUNCH MEETING WITH PAUL WHITEWAY, BRITISH EMBASSY, WEDNESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 1982.

This was meant to be an informal lunch. I was reciprocating a lunch he had given me some months ago. The discussions covered a variety of political matters but no one subject was dealt with in any detail by either party.

As you suggested, I made the point that certain people were not very happy with two recently published articles in the Sunday Times - about a possible coup in Ireland and the Economist report indicating that after Mexico, Ireland was next on the I.M.F. list. He made little comment on the latter but seemed to totally agree that the Sunday Times story was journalism at its worst, remarking that in the same issue the paper was making the claim that overseas readers regarded editorial content as gospel.

He raised the question of Anglo Irish relations, commenting that they were periodically good or bad, and we discussed the possible cause of the current state of the relationship. My view was that the present state had been brought about by the British Government's handling of the latest initiative on the North, making the point that contrary to the spirit of the December 1980 Summit Agreement, Mr. Haughey had not been consulted in advance about the Prior plan. He seemed to accept that such an agreement had been made between Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Haughey but did not offer a reason for lack of consultation before the plan was made known. He referred to the fact that the plan had been leaked to the media long before it was published, and he put this down to Mr. Prior having very good contacts built up while he was in other Government Departments.

He drew my attention to a report in that morning's Irish Independent in which Chris Glennon quoted an "informed source" as suggesting that Prior would be making a visit here. He made the reference in a manner which suggested that such a visit was definitely not on. In turn, I suggested that such a visit would be a waste of time, and that if there were to be fresh talks on the issue, these would need to be held at heads of government level.

He said it was unfortunate that the SDLP had adopted an abstentionist policy in regard to the new Northern Assembly but he said the British Government hoped the SDLP would take their seats "eventually". He referred to the fact that Sinn Fein had adopted similar tactics in the early days of this State. He gave the impression that there was no way the date for the elections would be changed.

He asked if it were true the Taoiseach's Department and the Department of Foreign Affairs were "not talking" at the moment. I professed no knowledge of this. He also wanted to know if the Government's present policy on Northern Ireland was Mr. Haughey's own or yours or a combination of both and he wondered if Padraic O hAnnrachain was making any contribution to Northern Ireland policy these days. I hope I was suitably non committal in this area.

He also said that it was his view that the British Government in the December 1980 Communique had totally underestimated the reaction from Northern Unionists. He seemed surprised that Mr. Haughey might have regarded his non involvement in the Prior initiative as something of a rebuff and said he would make this point known in London. I asked him if he thought the Northern Ireland situation would ever be resolved and he said "never".

The lunch concluded with Mr. Whiteway saying he had found the meeting "most informative" and he said he thought we should get together on a more regular basis.

Mr. Nally,
Mr. Dunlop
was meeting
Mr. O'Byrne
at Embassy
today, and I
asked him to
put firmly to
the head
of Dept.
Such an
impression of
course damaging
and I am surprised
at such weakness
persisting. I
have brought it to
his attention
and leave it to
your discretion
to what extent
to Mr. Dunlop
about it
3/9/82 M/SM