

CC PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Lord Gowrie (L&B)
PS/Mr Woodfield (L&B)
PS/Sir Ewart Bell
Mr Marshall
Mr Belloch
Mr Angel
Mr Wyatt
Mr Gilliland
Mr Buxton
Mr Doyne-Ditmas
Mr Harrington
Mr Abbott
Miss Christopherson
Mr Shepherd
Mr Blatherwick

MEETING WITH HM AMBASSADOR TO DUBLIN, SIR LEONARD FIGG, STORMONT CASTLE,
18 JUNE 1982

Present:- Secretary of State Sir Leonard Figg
Mr Boys Smith

Sir Leonard Figg made the following points:-

- (i) the attention of the Irish Government had recently been focussed on events in the Falkland Islands; the difficulties for the UK were very largely the result of the views of Mr Haughey and one or two other Ministers. In Sir Leonard's view Mr Collins had proved to be only a cypher. The Falklands crisis had given Mr Haughey the opportunity to seek to be a world statesman, (through it was widely recognised that his attempt had rebounded to his disadvantage) and to apply pressure on the British Government. DFA and other officials had however indicated they were anxious to restore closer relations.
- (ii) Mr Haughey had shown fundamental inconsistencies in his approach, saying in the one hand that he hoped to seek developments in Northern Ireland in association with the UK Government and yet at the same time souring Anglo-Irish relations by his approach to the Falklands and other matters. Sir Leonard believed that Mr Haughey's illusions over the relevance of Anglo-Irish relations to affairs in Northern Ireland went back to the December 1980 summit.

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After the summit Mr Haughey believed that by (say) mid 1981 the Prime Minister would be able to deliver the Unionists to a conference at which they would discuss the constitution of Northern Ireland. He subsequently understood that talk would be only of institutions; the hunger strikes and election in the Republic had helped to hinder the progress Mr Haughey had originally sought, and Northern Ireland had scarcely featured in the recent elections. This had not however prevented Mr Haughey declaring it his top priority immediately on assuming office.

- (iii) notwithstanding the views of Mr Haughey on the Government's Northern Ireland policy, other opinion might be better disposed. Mr Des O'Malley had told Sir Leonard that he found some of the proposals most attractive. Sir Leonard believed that there was widespread ignorance of the proposals and that after the summer holidays an effort should be made to explain them in the Republic; he thought that many would be ready to listen.
- (iv) it would not be right for the Secretary of State to visit the Republic before the Autumn, but a visit then could be useful. The Secretary of State would come to call on Mr Collins, but could expect also to see Mr Haughey. He noted the Secretary of State would be free in principle to come from mid-September onwards.
- (v) he expected the present Government to survive at least through the summer; he could not be certain after that. The economy of the Republic remained in a very bad state, and there was no sight of the restraints on public expenditure which were generally believed to be essential.
- (vi) Dr Fitzgerald would be in London on Monday, 28 June, after the Ditchley conference, and would be glad to meet

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the Secretary of State. Sir Leonard hoped very much that this would be possible. In Sir Leonard's view Dr Fitzgerald was not up-to-date on SDLP thinking, and did not understand the Government's proposals in detail. He hoped that the Secretary of State would be able to cover both matters in their meeting.

The Secretary of State outlined the Parliamentary situation as it effected the Northern Ireland Bill, and assured Sir Leonard that the measure would be passed. He referred to those aspects of the proposals which should prove attractive to the SDLP, and said that there was now no prospect at all, in Parliamentary as well as other terms, of early progress being made on an Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Body. He agreed that it would not be right for him to visit the Republic for the time being, though he hoped it would prove possible for him to establish closer personal links when the right moment came. He would welcome the opportunity to meet Dr Fitzgerald on 28 June, and noted that Sir Leonard agreed Dr Fitzgerald should be offered briefing on the Bill before their meeting.

S. W. Boys Smith

S W BOYS SMITH
Private Secretary

21 June 1982