

2020/17/32

S21539L

Taoiseach and British
Prime Minister Meetings

28/11/90 - 15/12/90

S21539L

START of file

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

European Council, Rome, ¹⁵ December 1990

Taoiseach's Meeting with Prime Minister Major

The meeting took place in the room where the Council had been held in the Palazzo Montecitorio. It lasted for just under 15 minutes and, apart from the principals, was attended by Charles Powell and the undersigned. The tone of the meeting was very friendly.

The Taoiseach opened by congratulating the Prime Minister on his appointment and commented on how good the Council had been, in terms of general understanding and harmony.

The Prime Minister said that in the IGCs he foresaw certain difficulties but thought it was as well to face them. The Taoiseach agreed - and went on to say that he had been thinking that it would be a good idea to drop over and see the Prime Minister for a general discussion on the many issues in which the two countries share an interest - both in European Community and in relation to Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister said that he would like to see how Peter Brooke's initiative got on. When its fate seemed more certain, then, possibly, we might talk about "something more substantive". He said that it would be extremely agreeable to visit Dublin, a city he had never seen. The Taoiseach took up this expression of interest and said that he would be only too glad to arrange something.

As there was pressure on both men to go immediately to the opening session of the IGC, which was taking place at the time, they then agreed on the line to be taken with the press. This was to the effect that they had had a meeting and agreed to have a fuller meeting in the New Year for a discussion of European and bilateral matters; and that the meeting might be of a substantive nature.


Dermot Nally

17 December 1990

- c.c. Secretary Dorr, Department of Foreign Affairs
- Assistant Secretary Gallagher, "
- Assistant Secretary Barrington, "

MK
17.12
the O'Brien
To see
v. the
we might
a file
prepared
meeting
with
Prime
in
1991
hmk
18.12



BRITISH EMBASSY,

SEEN DUBLIN.

TAOISEACH

7 December 1990

Mr Donagh Morgan
Private Secretary to the Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
DUBLIN 2

Mr by [unclear] [unclear]
20.12.90
20712

Dear Donagh,

In the Ambassador's absence from Dublin, I am delighted to forward to you the enclosed message to the Taoiseach from the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Thorpe

J W Thorp
Deputy Head of Mission

*Mr. Mally,
for information.*

*OK.
7/12.*



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

3 December 1990

JH

1/ear 1207-2421,

Thank you very much for your kind message on my appointment as Prime Minister. I share your wish to see our two Governments work closely together to defeat terrorism and in other ways. I look forward to an early meeting. Meanwhile, I send you my best wishes.

*Your Sincerely
John Major*

Mr. Charles Haughey, T.D.

Department OF THE TAOISEACH

To be dealt with **IMMEDIATELY** and not placed with other papers.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

To be answered on: Tuesday, 4th December, 1990.

Regd. No.	Put down by:— Deputy John Bruton	Question
	<p>Description: To ask the Taoiseach if he has any plans to meet the new British Prime Minister, John Major, M.P.; and if he will outline the subjects he proposes to discuss with him.</p>	2

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<i>Mr Keenan</i>	<i>30/11/90</i>		
<i>Secretary to the Government</i>	<i>30-11-90</i>		
<i>Taoiseach</i>	<i>30/11</i>		
<i>M V</i>	<i>4/12</i>		
<i>Mr K. Caspary</i>	<i>4-12-90</i>		

Immediately action is concluded these papers should be returned to

Date 4 December 1990

Vol 403 NO 4 Cols 763-765

Meeting with British Prime Minister.

2. **Mr. J. Bruton** asked the Taoiseach if he has any plans to meet the new British Prime Minister, John Major, MP; and if he will outline the subjects he proposes to discuss with him.

The Taoiseach: Plans for any such meeting would be announced, in accordance with established practice, simultaneously in Dublin and London close to the time of the meeting. In my message of congratulations to the new British Prime Minister I indicated that I looked forward in particular to meeting him at the European Council in Rome later this month.

Mr. J. Bruton: Would the Taoiseach not agree that it would be desirable that there be a special meeting between himself and the new British Prime Minister with a view to ensuring that the Prime Minister uses his powers to give renewed emphasis to the Brooke talks, particularly in view of the commitment in Article 4 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, to agreement on a procedure for devolution

of authority to an administration within Northern Ireland?

The Taoiseach: Yes, it would be desirable that I should have a meeting with the new British Premier as soon as possible. I am sure we will be able to meet in Rome. But I am sure the Deputy will also appreciate that the new Prime Minister coming into office, in the circumstances in which he did, will have many pressures on him at this stage. Therefore, I would not particularly press for an urgent meeting with him but I would hope that a major meeting can be arranged before too long.

Mr. J. Bruton: I recollect that the Taoiseach had an aversion to anybody who had "major" in their name recently but realise he was referring to a body in this country at that time. Would the Taoiseach not agree that, in view of the persistent suggestions that the current Brooke talks are in difficulty, there is a need for him to take a special initiative with a view to having these talks proceed more rapidly, and that an initiative from him to seek a special meeting with the British Prime Minister would underline his Government's commitment and that of all the parties in this House to making a success of the current round of Brooke talks?

The Taoiseach: I would not seriously think that is necessary at this stage. The Secretary of State, Mr. Peter Brooke, has been left in charge by the British Prime Minister. That represents a little more confidence in the Secretary of State and in the initiative which he is conducting.

An Ceann Comhairle: Can I bring in Deputy Garland? He has been offering for some time.

Mr. Garland: To use the expression Deputy Bruton used, a special initiative is now needed, will the Taoiseach ask Mr. Major when he sees him in Rome if anything can be done to have the Birmingham Six released before Christmas?

Will he consider that as very high in his priorities when he sees Mr. Major?

The Taoiseach: Yes, but there is really no need to do that. Our position in regard to the Birmingham Six is constantly reiterated to the British Government.

Mr. J. Bruton: I do not want to press the Taoiseach unduly on this, but can I ask him to agree that if there is any indication that the Brooke talks are about to break down or run into the sand, he will revise his view in the light of that and seek a special meeting with the British Prime Minister with a view to doing everything in his power to make a success of these talks?

The Taoiseach: We already are doing everything in our power to make a success of the talks and we will continue to do so. As I have said, we are being very flexible and progressive in our approach. I did not really say to the House that there is any ground for belief that there is imminent danger of breakdown.

21539.M

QUESTION NO. 2

INDEXED

DÁIL QUESTION addressed to the Taoiseach
by Deputy John Bruton for answer on
Tuesday, 4th December, 1990.

QUESTION:

To ask the Taoiseach if he has any plans to meet the new British Prime Minister, John Major, M.P.; and if he will outline the subjects he proposes to discuss with him.

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Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 5 December 1990 Time: _____

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From: Brin McCarthy

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30/11

*Secretary to the
Government
Mr. Howan
30.11.90
Suggested reply
30/11/90*

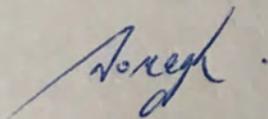
ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

Taoiseach,

Attached is your list of Questions for Tuesday and Wednesday next.

We are likely to be left with two for Tuesday (highlighted) and one for Wednesday (highlighted).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A. J. ...', followed by a period.

30th November, 1990.

NOTE FOR TAOISEACH'S INFORMATION

1. Questions relating to meetings with the British Prime Minister, - other than en marge of European Councils - are regularly addressed to the Taoiseach, the last such occasion being 5 December, 1989. In his reply the Taoiseach stated that meetings en marge of European Councils were valuable and had proved adequate but that if a formal Summit meeting appeared to be necessary it could be arranged. On 19 July, 1989, the Taoiseach answered a similar question from Deputy Jim O'Keefe. The relevant Dail debates are attached.
2. In his message of good wishes to the new British Prime Minister, the Taoiseach said that he looked forward to working with him within the European Community and in particular to meeting him at the European Council in Rome later this month. The text of the Taoiseach's message to Mr. Major is attached.



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

1. M. Murphy
2. M. Murphy (GIS) ha
copy: c
sent to
28/11

Message from the Taoiseach to Prime Minister Major

I offer you my warm congratulations and wish you every success as you assume your new responsibilities as Prime Minister.

I look forward to working closely with you to develop further the good relations between our two Governments and the peoples of our two countries.

I also look forward to working with you within the European Community and in particular to meeting you at the European Council in Rome in a few weeks time.

My colleagues in Government, including some who have known and worked closely with you in your previous posts, join with me in sending you our warm good wishes on your appointment.

Charles J. Haughey, T.D.,
Taoiseach.

28 November, 1990.

Mr. Turti
M. Wile
Buck 28/11

[Mr. Currie.]
he agree that nevertheless he should welcome — indeed and I am glad to note he has welcomed — the comments Mr. John Taylor has made because he is of very considerable importance to the future. He recognises that himself and I think we ought to recognise it as well.

The Taoiseach: Quite.

Mr. J. Higgins: Would the Taoiseach say whether exactly the same text was transmitted to each of the MEPs or whether there was any variation or change of emphasis in relation to each correspondent?

The Taoiseach: I would like the front bench of Fine Gael to make up their minds about this. On the one hand Deputy John Bruton tells me that these things should be done privately. Now the Chief Whip of the Fine Gael Party asks me for details of what I said.

Mr. J. Bruton: May I ask the Taoiseach—

The Taoiseach: Will Deputy Bruton sit down? I am dealing with Deputy J. Higgins.

An Ceann Comhairle: Order. May I ask whether the Taoiseach has concluded his remarks?

The Taoiseach: Certainly, yes.

Mr. J. Bruton: I know the Taoiseach would like this House to be run somewhat like the *Volkskammer*. The Taoiseach, in a disorderly fashion, remains standing. Would he agree that it is common prudence in diplomatic matters that if one wishes to make a *démarche* of this kind, one should give advance notice to those from whom it is expected there should be a response rather than make such a statement publicly in the first instance?

An Ceann Comhairle: Quite clearly we are having repetition.

The Taoiseach: — and convoluted repetition, a *Cheann Comhairle*.

An Ceann Comhairle: Deputy Spring has been offering.

Mr. J. Bruton: In this case I think the convolution is in the Taoiseach's mind because of an absence of understanding on his part.

Mr. Spring: May I seek clarification in relation to Question No. 11. Has the Taoiseach considered issuing an invitation to Mr. John Taylor, MEP, to come to a meeting or would he consider that worthwhile at this stage?

The Taoiseach: I would be delighted to meet John Taylor at any time.

Mr. Spring: Has the Taoiseach issued him an invitation?

The Taoiseach: Not at present but, as the Deputy knows, since it was he who first put forward the idea here, my invitation is a standing one.

Meeting with UK Prime Minister.

12. **Mr. Dukes** asked the Taoiseach if he proposes to arrange a meeting with the UK Prime Minister which would be devoted exclusively to Anglo-Irish relations.

The Taoiseach: As I have said before, my six monthly meetings with the British Prime Minister *en marge* of European Council meetings are valuable and have proved adequate to exchange views on current issues. However, if a formal Summit meeting appears to be necessary or beneficial at any time it can, I am sure, be arranged. Plans for any such meeting would be announced, in accordance with established practice, simultaneously in Dublin and London close to the time of the meeting.

Mr. J. Bruton: Would the Taoiseach agree that meetings *en marge* of the European Council, of necessity operate within

the time constraints dictated by other agenda items to be considered by them? Would he agree that the importance of the Anglo-Irish relationship, and the many outstanding issues contained therein, require that in addition to there being regular meetings within an EC context there should also be an established practice of regular bilateral meetings outside the EC context to deal with these matters that do not naturally come within the EC ambit?

The Taoiseach: So far I have found — and I think the British Prime Minister would probably agree that she too has found — that these meetings at European Summits have been sufficient for our purposes.

Mr. J. Bruton: Would the Taoiseach not agree that in regard to matters of this kind there are more urgent initiatives on our side, so to speak, and that therefore rather than satisfying himself that whatever satisfies the British Prime Minister in this regard, he should be more active in seeking bilateral meetings to deal with outstanding issues in the Irish interest?

The Taoiseach: As I have said, if bilateral meetings appear to be necessary or would appear to yield any beneficial result at any given stage, there is nothing to prevent them being held. On the other hand, there is no point in holding meetings just for the sake of holding meetings.

Mr. J. Bruton: Would the Taoiseach agree that meetings on the margins of the European Council are meetings which almost could not be avoided and that if one did not have a meeting in that context, people would be wondering why he did not have one? Therefore, would the Taoiseach not agree that if there are outstanding matters in Anglo-Irish relations — on which his party constantly wish to harp — there should be bilateral meetings of an open-ended kind at which one is not constrained by time restrictions imposed by others, when such issues could be brought to a conclusion rather

than being kept at a point on the centigrade scale somewhat below the boil in order to maintain a degree of tension which may be of partisan benefit to the Taoiseach?

The Taoiseach: There are all sorts of avenues available and there is a constant flow of communication at different levels between the two Administrations. I am not aware of any issues which cannot be dealt with within the existing procedures.

Mr. J. Bruton: Would the Taoiseach not agree — as Presidents Bush and Gorbachev have found it is useful to have personal relations in matters of this kind — that many of the matters about which the Taoiseach engages in press release politics might more easily be dealt with if there was a regularly established pattern of bilateral meetings outside the margins of the European Council?

The Taoiseach: I can do no more than say that if it appears at any time that a meeting would be helpful or beneficial it can always be held.

An Ceann Comhairle: We must now proceed to another question.

Discussions with EC Commission President.

13. **Mr. Dukes** asked the Taoiseach if he proposes to put forward any amendments to the draft Social Charter at the forthcoming EC Summit meeting; if so, the nature of such amendments; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

14. **Mr. Dukes** asked the Taoiseach if he accepts the three fundamental conclusions in relation to the economic and monetary integration of the EC identified by the NESC in its Report No. 88; if so, whether he will be guided by these conclusions during discussions of the European Monetary Union at the forthcoming EC Summit meeting; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

15. **Mr. Dukes** asked the Taoiseach if.

DAIL/SEANAD EIREANN

Extract from Official Report of Debates

Date 19 July 1989

Vol 391 NO 6 Col 523-526

523

Questions—

19 JULY 1989.

Oral Answers

524

Nil—continued

Doyle, Joe.
Dukes, Alan.
Durkan, Bernard.
Enright, Thomas W.
Farrelly, John V.
Fennell, Nuala.
Ferris, Michael.
Finnucane, Michael.
FitzGerald, Garret.
Garland, Roger.
Gilmore, Eamon.
Gregory, Tony.
Harte, Paddy.
Higgins, Jim.
Higgins, Michael D.
Hogan, Philip.
Howlin, Brendan.
Kavanagh, Liam.
Kemmy, Jim.
Kenny, Enda.
Lee, Pat.
Lowry, Michael.
McCartan, Pat.
McCormack, Pádraic.
McGahon, Brendan.

McGinty, Dinny.
Mac Giolla, Tomás.
McGrath, Paul.
Mitchell, Gae.
Moynihan, Michael.
Nealon, Ted.
O'Brien, Fergus.
O'Keefe, Jim.
O'Shea, Brian.
O'Sullivan, Gerry.
O'Sullivan, Toddy.
Partison, Stamus.
Quinn, Ruairi.
Rabbitte, Pat.
Reynolds, Gerry.
Ryan, Seán.
Shatter, Alan.
Sheehan, Patrick J.
Sherlock, Joe.
Spring, Dick.
Stagg, Emmet.
Taylor, Mervyn.
Taylor-Quinn, Madeleine.
Timmins, Godfrey.
Yates, Ivan.

Tellers: Tá, Deputies V. Brady and D. Ahern; Níl, Deputies J. Higgins and Boylan.

Question declared carried.

Sitting suspended at 1.40 p.m. and resumed at 2.30 p.m.

Ceisteanna—Questions.

Oral Answers.

Meeting with British Prime Minister.

1. Mr. J. O'Keefe asked the Taoiseach when he will have a full meeting with the British Prime Minister; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

The Taoiseach: The Deputy will be aware that my most recent meeting with the British Prime Minister took place on 26 June when we were both attending the European Council in Madrid.

Plans for meetings that might be arranged with the Prime Minister, other than at European Councils, would be

announced, in accordance with established practice, simultaneously in Dublin and London close to the time of the meeting.

Mr. J. O'Keefe: I am anxious to ascertain from the Taoiseach whether there is any intention to have a full meeting with the British Prime Minister — I am not referring to these ten minute jobs on the margin of the European Council. My recollection is that the present Taoiseach has not had such a meeting with the UK Prime Minister in either London or Dublin since 1982. Does this indicate that he has decided to let the standard practice established by his predecessor fall into disuse?

The Taoiseach: As I explained when this question was last put to me in April in the last Dáil, if such a meeting would appear at any time to be necessary or beneficial, it can of course be held. I would like to assure the Deputy that the six monthly meetings which take place between the British Prime Minister and myself at European Council meetings are

quite valuable and afford us an opportunity to exchange views on current issues.

Mr. J. O'Keeffe: Prior to the Taoiseach taking office early in 1987 there was a standard arrangement whereby his predecessor and the UK Prime Minister met regularly either in London or Dublin. It was my understanding that it was the intention of the present Taoiseach to continue that arrangement but that has not been done. I would like to know why it has not been done, whether there is any intention to re-establish that arrangement and, if not, is it because the Taoiseach has nothing to say in relation to Anglo-Irish affairs or the problems in Northern Ireland? Is he putting the relationship between the UK and Ireland, in particular in so far as it affects Northern Ireland, into a deep freeze?

The Taoiseach: There is no particular arrangement that has been set aside or that is not being adhered to. The Deputy will appreciate that with regard to Anglo-Irish relations in general and Northern Ireland matters in particular, there is now a regular routine of inter-governmental conference meetings at which these matters are dealt with on an on-going basis as they arise.

Mr. Dukes: The Taoiseach has said that he would hold such a meeting if he felt it were either necessary or beneficial. I understand from that that it is the Taoiseach's view at the moment that such a meeting would be neither necessary nor beneficial. If that is the case, why is he of that view? Why would it not be beneficial or necessary to meet Mrs. Thatcher at this point?

The Taoiseach: The Deputy knows as well as I do that having meetings just for the sake of it can be unhelpful. Meetings of that kind, if they are scheduled and stated to be of a major nature, would arouse expectations and perhaps subsequently disappointment. Unless there was a specific reason for a major meeting, I do not think there is any pressure for

holding such a meeting. As I said, the six monthly meetings afford us an opportunity of dealing with anything of importance that arises. Certainly if there was a need for a major meeting it would arise during the course of those Council meetings. Many of the matters that might normally have been dealt with in previous years at meetings between Prime Ministers are now the subject of these on-going discussions within the context of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Deputy John Bruton rose.

An Ceann Comhairle: I want to make progress on other questions. A final question, Deputy John Bruton.

Mr. J. Bruton: Would the Taoiseach consider it indicative of the maturity that has now been reached in Anglo-Irish relations if there was to be a formal visit to this country by the British Prime Minister similar to the visits to this country by political heads from the United States, France, Australia and other countries with whom we conduct equivalent relations or is there a particular problem with an invitation to Britain?

The Taoiseach: I do not think there is a particular problem. The matter just has never arisen.

Mr. J. Bruton: In 60 years.

The Taoiseach: Of course, the British Prime Minister will be here for the European Council meeting which will be held during our Presidency next year.

Ministerial Membership of Local Authorities.

2. **Mr. J. O'Keeffe** asked the Taoiseach whether all members of the Government have resigned their positions as members of local authorities; and if he will outline his policy generally regarding Ministers and Ministers of State retaining membership of local authorities.

17

To ask the Taoiseach if he has any plans to meet the new British Prime Minister, John Major, M.P.; and if he will outline the subjects he proposes to discuss with him.- John Bruton.

For ORAL answer on Tuesday 4th December, 1990.

Brian

(as per

Spakman)

END of internal file

21539

30 November, 1990.

The Right Honourable John Major, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London.

[Dear John]

Please accept my warm congratulations on your election to the leadership of your party and, in particular, on your appointment as Prime Minister. I was delighted to see you moving next door and assuming the responsibilities of Head of Government - especially at an age which makes you the youngest Prime Minister this century.

My delight is tempered only by the realisation that you shall now be lost to the ECOFIN Council. I attend most meetings of the European Council and shall hope to see you on those occasions. Regrettably, however, the European Council does not have informal sessions, such as we had at Ashford Castle last Spring. However, I venture to express the hope that you will be able to pay further visits to Ireland, this time as Prime Minister.

You are taking office at a very important juncture in European affairs. May I wish you every success in these matters and in all your other manifold responsibilities. *[I express the hope that you and Norma will be very happy in your new roles.]*
~~[With best wishes,~~

Yours sincerely,]

Maire T.D.

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, T.D.,
Minister of State for European Affairs.

Draft

Message from the Taoiseach to Prime Minister Major

For every success

I offer you my warm congratulations and ~~and~~ wish ~~as~~ you assume
new responsibilities as Prime Minister.

I look forward to working closely with you to develop further the
good relations between our two Governments and the peoples of our
two countries, ~~and, within this framework, to working in~~
~~collaboration with you towards a resolution of the problem of~~
~~Northern Ireland.~~

working

I also look forward to ~~cooperating~~ *working* with you within the European
Community and in particular to meeting you at the European
Council in Rome in a few weeks time.

My colleagues in Government, including some who have known and
worked closely with you in your previous posts, join with me in
offering you our warm good wishes on your appointment.

Charles J. Haughey, T.D.
Taoiseach
November, 1990

M. Morgan

agreed by Taoiseach

as amended.

Please arrange to mine

- and send copy, as amended, to

Foreign Affairs.

281''

***Page(s) illegible in
original document***

~~Mr. G. G. G. G.~~
10.4.91.
10/4

Taoiseach

I spoke to the British about the proposed meeting between the Prime Minister and Deputy Bruton. We are told that the meeting is about European Parliament business. The Conservatives who are members of one party of the European Parliament wish to join the Europeans People Party of which Fine Gael are members and the two men wish to speak about this.

The British will be saying after the meeting that the discussion was about European Parliament business. They are fully aware of the sensitivities for us of discussions now effecting Northern Ireland.

We are trying to fix a time and venue for your talks here with the Prime Minister.

~~Draft~~ *communiqué* is attached, prepared by N. Dorr.

8/4

7 APRIL 1991

~~to Mr. Haughey~~
huk
9.4.91 M. Krowan

DRAFT 2

As moved to
press in Kitchener on
8/4/91
914

The Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, T.D and the Prime Minister, Mr. John Major M.P had a short meeting this evening in Luxembourg where both were attending a special meeting of Heads of State or Government of the EC.

In the course of their meeting they reviewed current issues in Anglo-Irish relations and expressed satisfaction at the recent agreement on a framework for talks involving representatives of constitutional parties in Northern Ireland and the two Governments.

§ The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister agreed in principle to meet again within the next few months for a more general discussion of current issues in the European Community. §

8 April 1991

M. Krowan

The file on this work
British Am.

RS



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

1. M. Keenan
2. M. M. (H/S have
copy: copy
sent to PPS
28/11

Message from the Taoiseach to Prime Minister Major

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I also look forward to working with you within the European Community and in particular to meeting you at the European Council in Rome in a few weeks time.

My colleagues in Government, including some who have known and worked closely with you in your previous posts, join with me in sending you our warm good wishes on your appointment.

Charles J. Haughey, T.D.,
Taoiseach.
28 November, 1990.

Mr. Tardie
M. Hile
Burt 28/11

END of file