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PSS,

Attached is a short note outlining some of the topics which may come up during the Minister's discussion with the British Foreign Secretary on Monday.

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21 January 1983

Minister's meeting with British Foreign Secretary at Council
of Ministers, 24/25 January 1983

Checklist of issues which may be discussed

1. Pym may try to concentrate on purely bilateral aspects, i.e. Dublin/London, aspects of Anglo-Irish relationship especially given its recent deterioration and Foreign Office's natural preoccupations. He may suggest possible reactivation measures in the Anglo-Irish process which would have an East West bias. On this, the Minister might wish to respond by welcoming this opportunity to meet Pym as a clear indication of both sides' desire to carefully restructure the Anglo-Irish relationship. In indicating agreement in principle to any suggestion by Pym for institutional movement, the Minister might stress the futility of setting up structures without a representative involvement from Northern Ireland.
2. To direct Pym towards our immediate concerns the Minister may wish to give his impressions of the present crisis in Northern Ireland and the situation on the ground, following his recent visit there. This could be used to impress on the Foreign Secretary the need for action now to limit the PSF impact at the next Westminster election. The Minister may wish to make clear our awareness of the realities of the British political situation but at the same time ask if the British appreciate the potential fallout from a PSF foothold, abstentionist or otherwise, at Westminster. He may also wish to point out that an Assembly kept ticking over for short-term political reasons will simply not meet the needs of the situation in our view.
3. Pym may be briefed to enquire of our attitude to the SDLP proposal for a Council for a New Ireland. The Minister in reply may wish to stress our full understanding of the SDLP's predicament. We are at present carrying out an intensive review of our policy in the light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Northern Ireland and look to meetings such as today's to establish how the

British see matters developing in the coming months and in the longer term. At present the SDLP have nothing to offer moderate nationalists in Northern Ireland. We will have to sympathetically examine their proposal as we believe it would be disastrous to allow further slippage in their position.

4. Arising from the foregoing points the Minister may wish to probe Pym on the British attitude to the menace of PSF. He may wish to refer to the long-term implications for the State as we see them and urge upon Pym the necessity for a joint British-Irish position linked to political movement.

5. Developing the theme that the seriousness of the situation in Northern Ireland requires a radical reappraisal by both Governments and urgent action the Minister might seek to prepare the ground for a substantial meeting between the Taoiseach and Mrs Thatcher en marge of the European Council in March. Mentioning, as well, the forthcoming meeting with Prior may be a way to draw Pym out a little on the different tendencies within the present British Cabinet on Northern Ireland.

6. The Minister may wish to take the opportunity presented by the meeting (and any discussion of voting criteria for European Parliament elections) to inform Pym of the Government's intention to bring forward proposals on extending voting rights to British citizens here in the very near future.

7. The commitment to security cooperation might be stressed. Should there be any questioning by Pym in this area the point could be made that the PSF/PIRA are a threat to all of Ireland and to our State's institutions. The threat they pose is growing because our two Governments are not tackling the problem together. We in Ireland have every interest in defeating the Provo organisation. But the political economic climate for such a defeat can only emerge through concerted action by the two Governments.