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F R. 8/5

① Sir Ewart 25/6.
② PS/ CEN/30
POL

325/6 (19).

1232 /RAB
24 JUN 1982
MUFAX ROOM
STORMONT HOUSE

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L)

cc: PS/SofS(B)
PS/Ld Gowrie (L&B) n.
PS/PUS (L&B) n.
PS/Sir Ewart Bell
Mr Marshall n.
Mr Blelloch
Mr Angel n.
Mr Wyatt n.
Mr Gilliland n.
Mr Buxton
Mr Doyne-Ditmas
Mr Abbott
Miss Christopherson n.
Mr Blatherwick
Mr Shepherd

MEETING WITH DR FITZGERALD - 11 AM MONDAY 28 JUNE

Dr FitzGerald will have had a detailed briefing on the Northern Ireland Bill immediately before he meets the Secretary of State and may wish to follow-up any points arising. He will no doubt be interested to have the Secretary of State's views on the wider political context of the Bill.

2. The differences between Dr FitzGerald's views on Northern Ireland and those of Mr Haughey are brought out in the attached note. Most significantly, although he has not come out unambiguously in favour of the devolution proposals, Dr FitzGerald is clearly prepared to accept the prospect of devolution for Northern Ireland within the UK, albeit on an interim basis. In its statement issued on the publication of the White Paper, Fine Gael characterised the proposals as "the first attempt in many years to tackle the fundamental problem of bringing about devolved government in Northern Ireland on a basis that will secure the involvement of both sections of the community During his Dimbleby Lecture, Dr FitzGerald spoke of the "urgent need for some kind of interim solution to provide a breathing space in which the people of the island can consider their longer-term future, an objective towards which Mr Prior's initiative is presumably directed" He went on to consider what political solution might be found in that longer term future which would "adequately express, and at the same

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time safeguard, the senses of identity of the two traditions in Ireland". He expressed the hope that the creation of a pluralist society in the South might enable a "purged Nationalism" to join with a similarly purged unionism in a "new Ireland"....."based firmly on the principles of civil and religious liberty".

3. The Secretary of State might acknowledge the legitimacy of this aspiration and point out that others could equally well argue that devolution on a basis acceptable to the minority would result in the strengthening of the Union. The end result might well be a middle course whereby both parts of the community in Northern Ireland compromise some of their ultimate aspirations in an entirely new arrangement. The important point is that the people of Northern Ireland should have a period of political stability, security and economic regeneration in which to think sensibly about these issues. It may be worth seeking Dr FitzGerald's support for the contention that the devolution proposals do not preclude, and are in fact a precondition for, peaceful progress towards <u>any</u> longer term settlement. It would be particularly helpful if Dr FitzGerald could put this point to the SDLP (he has close contacts with John Hume) which will need to use arguments like this when, as we hope, it adopts a policy of constructive participation in the Assembly.

4. The basic difference between Dr FitzGerald's attitude to Anglo-Irish relations and that of Mr Haughey is that he aims to persuade the majority community in Northern Ireland of the virtues of Irish unity within the context of friendly relations with the UK, whereas Mr Haughey pays little heed to the views of the unionists and seeks to persuade or force HMG to encourage Irish unity. Dr FitzGerald would therefore probably be receptive to the argument that for its part HMG wants to continue the development of closer Anglo-Irish relations, but that any attempt (such as that made by Mr Haughey) to misrepresent the AIIC, and the development of Anglo-Irish relations in general, as a forum for the two governments to negotiate Irish unity <u>prevents</u> HMG developing the Anglo-Irish relationship as quickly or as fully as it might otherwise have wished.

5. Dr FitzGerald has criticised the handling (though not apparently the substance) of Irish policy during the Falklands crisis because of the damaging effect it had on British opinion. He may therefore

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appreciate the argument that when the AIIC was set up its only significant opponents in the UK were in the unionist community in Northern Ireland; but that Irish policy over the Falklands has seriously undermined support for the development of Anglo-Irish relations within GB.

R A HARRINGTON
SIL

24 June 1982

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NORTHERN IRELAND AND ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS

1. Anglo-Irish relations are presently under some considerable strain, partly because of Mr Haughey's attitude to the political initiative and partly because of the Irish Government's unhelpful actions during the Falklands crisis. It is too early to say what the long-term effects of the tension will be. The Government's policies in Northern Ireland would be best served by renewed progress towards a closer relationship with Dublin. But the Republic's unhelpful role in the Falklands crisis, and public awareness of it, means that attempts to develop the relationship just now would be heavily criticised.

2. The UK's basic aims in formalising the Anglo-Irish relationship were to accommodate the SDLP demand for a wider, or Irish, dimension to any Northern Ireland settlement without making it unacceptable to Protestants; to demonstrate to the Unionists that they did not have a veto on Anglo-Irish relations; to maintain the active co-operation of the Irish Government in security matters; and to persuade them to be at least acquiescent to devolved government in Northern Ireland.

3. Discussions began when Mr Haughey was last Taoiseach and they led through the Joint Studies to the establishment in November 1981 of the AIIC. By this time Dr FitzGerald was Taoiseach. On its establishment the AIIC fulfilled the UK requirements: the SDLP were encouraged, and Unionist complacency disturbed. However, there were and are certain contradictions between the UK and the Irish approach. We argue that the AIIC is only incidentally to do with Northern Ireland. The Irish believe that it gives them a role in the future of Northern Ireland. The contradictions were masked because Dr FitzGerald as Taoiseach acknowledged the need for change in the Republic, both in attitudes generally and in the Constitution. He avoided aspects of the AIIC which would disturb the Unionists. On Mr Haughey's return to power he seems to have set out to upset the balance. He "condemned" the White Paper proposals, and referred to the AIIC (and especially what he refers to as its Parliamentary "tier") as the policy most likely to promote negotiations which will lead inevitably to Irish unity. He speaks of this in terms which do

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not necessarily accept the need for this to be achieved with the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

4. Mr Haughey's references to the AIIC have thus strengthened Unionist fears that it is a device to lead them into a united Ireland, and have invested any Anglo-Irish meeting with political overtones and dangers. Further, his unconstructive response to the White Paper has weakened the chances of eventual acceptance by the SDLP and encouraged them to look south rather than to the Assembly for political progress. The appointment of Mr Mallon, deputy SDLP leader, to the Irish Senate is significant and will certainly encourage those in the SDLP who would rather maintain the pressure for Irish unity than accept devolution.

5. This makes it very difficult for HMG to develop the AIIC as quickly or as fully as it might otherwise have done. Irish actions during the Falklands crisis have compounded the difficulties which Mr Haughey's attitude to the AIIC had placed in the way of continuing the normal round of Ministerial meetings. The implications of this are being reviewed but for the moment bilateral Ministerial meetings are being avoided unless they have developed from business already under way and have demonstrable practical benefits, and efforts are being made to get across the fact that the obstacles to the development of the AIIC have all come from the Irish side.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
JUNE 1982