



JS
cc to
Co

Ireland

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 November 1981

BF

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from Mr. Oliver Napier about the forthcoming Anglo-Irish Summit. I should be grateful if you could let me have the text of a draft reply which the Prime Minister might send to Mr. Napier.

It would be helpful if your text could reach me by Wednesday 11 November.

I am sending copies of this letter, and its enclosure, to Roderic Lyne (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Stephen Boys-Smith, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 November 1981

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter to her of 30 October about the forthcoming Anglo-Irish Summit. Your letter is receiving attention and a reply will be sent as soon as possible.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Oliver Napier, Esq.



THE ALLIANCE PARTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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30th October 1981

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON

Dear Prime Minister

The Alliance Party welcomes the continuation of the Anglo Irish Summit meetings. We believe that these regular meetings between the representatives of Sovereign Governments can be of positive benefit for both the peoples of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland respectively. Social and economic co-operation which does not impinge upon the internal political affairs of Northern Ireland can do nothing but good. Not only is there economic benefit to be gained from co-operation but these meetings can help dispel the myths based upon the historical legacy of bitterness between the people of our own country and those of the Republic of Ireland.

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However, there is one aspect which concerns us about these Summits and this is the question of secrecy surrounding the matters discussed. You may remember that when an Alliance delegation met you in January of this year I urged that the issues under discussion should be made public. Indeed we warned of the dangers that might arise if secrecy was maintained. We were fearful that this situation could be exploited unscrupulously by politicians in both the Republic and also in Northern Ireland itself. Extremists were quick to seize upon the opportunities presented by genuine community concern and exploit it for their own selfish ends. We believe the experience of the last year stresses the need for openness and frankness regarding future Summit meetings. We would ask therefore that at your inaugural meeting with the new Premier of the Irish Republic to agree that the discussions would take place openly so that it can clearly be demonstrated that people have nothing to fear and indeed have everything to gain from these talks.

I should add that when an Alliance delegation recently met Dr. Fitzgerald we also argued that the veil of secrecy surrounding the talks should be dropped.

As a Party which supports the continuation of discussions between both Governments we are worried that the potential value could be jeopardised if the people of Northern Ireland fear that the constitutional future of the Province is under discussion. We accept your unambiguous assurances on this matter but as you well know there are irresponsible politicians in Northern Ireland who will be prepared to deliberately misrepresent what is under discussion in order to heighten community tension and fears.

We would therefore request an end to the secrecy surrounding these talks.

Yours sincerely

Oliver Napier