

File
John 15/12/96
John

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From: John Holmes
Date: 25 October 1996

PRIME MINISTER

cc: Miss Warburton

IRISH DIARY QUESTIONS

The next European Council is due to take place over Friday 13 and Saturday 14 December. John Bruton is trying to set up his pre-Council Presidency tour of capitals. We have identified the afternoon of Monday 9 December as a possible slot and provisionally offered it to the Irish.

As you are seeing Bruton, it will be impossible not to talk about Northern Ireland. A meeting would in any case be a good idea, although it is impossible to predict where events will be by then.

There is also the separate question of an Anglo/Irish Summit on non-Northern Ireland, particularly bilateral questions. Formally speaking, there should be two summits a year. Although you have met Bruton several times this year, and talked to him on the telephone a good deal, this has all been about Northern Ireland or, occasionally, European issues.

We could kill three birds with one stone by offering Bruton a reasonably long meeting on 9 December, eg 2½-3 hours, to cover all three issues. This would be a good deal less time consuming than trying to set up separate events.

Unfortunately (?), you cannot offer him either lunch or dinner.

Can't we change what we should offer a meal if possible.

Can't we change what we should offer a meal if possible.
You have also not paid a proper visit to Northern Ireland this year, apart from your brief trip for the opening of the talks in June. I think it would be

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worthwhile filling this gap if it can be done, though again the situation, and therefore the timing, is hard to predict.

Very attractive
I see two obvious possibilities. One is to go to Belfast on Thursday 12 December on your way to the European Council in Dublin. You could for example leave immediately after Cabinet, spend the afternoon and evening in the Province and leave for Dublin the following morning. It would mean missing PMQs, but you might be able to live with that.

Bob
Go if for
Alternatively, you could visit on Wednesday 18 December. You could leave for Belfast after the Audience on Tuesday 17 December, spend the following morning and lunchtime in Northern Ireland and return to London in the afternoon in good time for the Conservative Friends of Israel Annual Dinner that evening. If the House had risen by then, you could even do the visit on Tuesday 17 December, leaving in the early morning and getting back in time for the Audience.

... Diary extracts attached.

Content for me

- or the time for the Christmas dinner?*
what would I do with it?
- (i) to explore with the Irish a possibility of a longish, three-subject meeting with Bruton on 9 December?
 - (ii) to explore with the NIO one or both of the possible dates for a visit to Northern Ireland?


JOHN HOLMES

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1515 QUESTIONS
 1540 KEEP FREE FOR MPs
 1700 RETURN TO NO. 10
 1715 Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary +JEH

Friday 6 December

CONSTITUENCY DAY
 ?CWC LUNCH
 CONSTITUENCY EVENING ENGAGEMENT

Saturday 7 December

CONSTITUENCY EVENING ENGAGEMENT

Monday 9 December

0900 Keep free
 0930 Sir Robin Butler
 1000 Parliamentary Business Managers
 1030 Cabinet Committee Business
 1100 DPM +Party Chairman
 1130-1215 Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary +JEH
 1230 ?President of Angola +EO
 1300 Host lunch for colleagues (Commons) +JW
 1500 Keep free for JEH
 1730-1900 Keep free
 ? TOSCA WITH MR AND MRS PETER GUMMER
 +MRS MAJOR, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Tuesday 10 December

0900 Questions Briefing
 0930-1030 Keep free
 1030 Chancellor of the Exchequer +MW
 1245 Lunch and Questions Briefing
 1515 QUESTIONS
 1540 KEEP FREE FOR MPs
 1700 RETURN TO NO. 10
 1830 AUDIENCE
 1900-1945 RECEPTION
 1945 CONCERT
 2045 DINNER FOR DAME JOAN SUTHERLAND'S 70th BIRTHDAY
 + MRS MAJOR, +AA, AUSTRALIA HOUSE

Wednesday 11 December

0900-1300 Keep free for AW
 1500-1600 Press interview (Regional) +AP
 1730 Keep free
 1830-2000 Host General Reception + Mrs Major

Thursday 12 December

0900 Questions Briefing
 0930 Keep free

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1030 Cabinet
 1245 Lunch and Questions Briefing
 1515 QUESTIONS
 1540 KEEP FREE FOR MPs
 1700 RETURN TO NO. 10
 ? DEPART FOR DUBLIN

Friday 13 December

EUROPEAN COUNCIL, DUBLIN

Saturday 14 DecemberEUROPEAN COUNCIL, DUBLIN
 CONSTITUENCY SUPPER CLUBMonday 16 December

0900 Keep free
 0930 Sir Robin Butler
 1000 Parliamentary Business Managers
 1030 Cabinet Committee Business
 1100 DPM + Party Chairman
 1300 Host lunch for colleagues (Commons) + JW
 1500-1600 DPM + AA
 1800 CCO CHRISTMAS PARTY
 1900 CHIEF WHIP'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Tuesday 17 December

0900 ?Questions Briefing
 0930-1030 ?Keep free
 1030 Chancellor of the Exchequer + MW
 1245 ?Lunch and Questions Briefing
 1515 ?QUESTIONS
 1540 ?KEEP FREE FOR MPs
 1700 ?RETURN TO NO. 10
 1830 AUDIENCE

Wednesday 18 December

0900-1300 Keep free for AW
 1500-1545 Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary + JEH
 1900 ? RECEPTION BEFORE
 2000 CONSERVATIVE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL ANNUAL DINNER
 + HJ (DINNER JACKET)

Thursday 19 December

0900 ?Questions Briefing
 0930 ?Keep free
 1030 ?Cabinet
 1245 ?Lunch and Questions Briefing
 1515 ?QUESTIONS
 1540 ?KEEP FREE FOR MPs

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1700
1800

?RETURN TO NO. 10
?No 10 Christmas Party

Friday 20 December

?

BIRMINGHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
ANNUAL BANQUET

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