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CCRB  
SP.

Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

14 October 1993

London SW1A 2AH

Dear Roderic,

**NEXT BRITISH-IRISH SUMMIT**

Your letter of 8 October <sup>at 11.45</sup> asked us to take tentative soundings of the Irish about the possibility of holding the next Summit meeting on 3 December.

Our Ambassador in Dublin has spoken to the Secretary to the Irish Government, who has consulted the Taoiseach. The Taoiseach feels strongly that December is too late for the meeting and would much prefer a date in the latter half of November. He has not ruled out the possibility of an even earlier meeting if the situation warranted it. He also hopes to have an opportunity to talk to the Prime Minister in the margins of the Special European Council on 29 October.

If, as seems likely, late November is not possible for the Prime Minister, we could ask the Irish to accept 3 December (which we understand is not impossible for the Taoiseach), while not excluding an earlier meeting should the circumstances warrant it.

It would be helpful if, in responding to the Irish, the Ambassador could be reasonably positive about the possibility of a bilateral in the margins of the Special European Council (the Taoiseach has referred publicly to his expectation that he will be able to talk to the Prime Minister about Northern Ireland on 29 October); but without making a firm commitment.

I am sending copies of this letter to Jonathan Stephens (Northern Ireland Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

*James*

(C R V Stagg)  
Private Secretary

*Stagg*

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