

CONFIDENTIAL

Ireland



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

11 June 1980

Dear Michael,

Anglo/Irish Relations

The Irish Ambassador rang the Department this afternoon to say that the Taoiseach had just telephoned him to say that he was disturbed by reports that his Panorama interview (broadcast on 9 June) had occasioned some dissatisfaction in London. He had been concerned about two points in particular:

- (a) the suggestion that the timing of the broadcast had been related to yesterday's Cabinet Committee discussion about Northern Ireland. In fact he had given the interview shortly after his return to Ireland from his meeting with the Prime Minister on 21 May; the timing had been entirely a matter for the BBC;
- (b) the fact that a good deal of what he had actually said in the interview had not been broadcast. He had for example been asked by the interviewer whether he was turning down the British Government's political initiative for Northern Ireland. He had replied that it would be totally irresponsible for him to reject an initiative he had not yet seen. He feared that by omitting this and one or two other passages the BBC might have represented his position as being more negative than was in fact the case.

The Ambassador said the Taoiseach had asked him to do his best to see that the Prime Minister was informed of the above before she left for Venice.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Roy Harrington at the Northern Ireland Office.

Yours aw

Paul

(P Lever)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

11 JUN 1980

