



LPO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 December 1980

Dear Mr. Paisley

Thank you for your letter of 9 December about reaction in Northern Ireland to my meeting on Monday with Mr. Haughey and the communiqué (a copy of which I enclose) issued after it. I should be sorry if there were to be any misapprehension in Northern Ireland about the outcome of that meeting, and would therefore be glad to meet you shortly as you suggest. My office will be in touch with you to arrange a time.

Perhaps in advance of our meeting I can say a word of reassurance. As I have repeatedly underlined since my return from my meeting with Mr. Haughey, Northern Ireland Unionists have nothing to fear from the further development of the relationship between the United Kingdom and the Republic or from the programme of joint studies on which the two Governments are to embark. The major part of the programme of studies - dealing with citizenship rights, security matters, economic co-operation and measures to encourage mutual understanding - covers matters which self-evidently merit closer attention and further development.

As regards the other topic - which you single out in your letter - I cannot answer for what Mr. Haughey may have said about the studies of possible new institutional structures. But it is

/clear to me that

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clear to me that such institutions, assuming that the two Governments reached agreement on them, would be intended solely to bring the United Kingdom and the Republic closer together in a friendly and fruitful relationship. Many other nations have found such institutions beneficial. Since it is part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland would, of course, be involved with any such new structures and would, I believe, benefit greatly from them.

In your letter you attribute special significance to the use of the word 'dissent' in the communiqué. You are wrong to do so. The fact that there are differences in Northern Ireland is hardly open to question. It is against that background that the communiqué recognises, as I am sure you do, the need for peace, reconciliation and stability in Northern Ireland. The development of relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic could have an important part to play in helping to meet that need.

Finally, let me stress that it remains a fundamental assumption of all Government thinking on these matters that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and will remain so unless its people and the Westminster Parliament decide otherwise. I could hardly have made that clearer than I have done in recent days both in the House of Commons and outside it.

Unless you see objection, I propose to make public the text of this letter at the same time as news of your appointment with me is released.

Yours sincerely,

Raymond Deiter

The Reverend Ian Paisley, M.P.

Mr. W. J. Costello

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER THE TALKS BETWEEN MRS THATCHER AND MR HAUGHEY

ON 8 DECEMBER, 1980 IN DUBLIN

1. The Taoiseach, Mr C J Haughey, TD, today met the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, MP, in Dublin Castle. The Taoiseach was accompanied by Mr Brian Lenihan, TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and by Mr Michael O'Kennedy, TD, Minister for Finance. The Prime Minister was accompanied by the Rt Hon The Lord Carrington, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Rt Hon Geoffrey Howe, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins, MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.
2. The meeting, which was the first of those on which the Taoiseach and the Prime Minister agreed when they met in London on 21 May, covered a range of international issues, and the future development of the European Community, including the Budget, the Common Agricultural Policy, EMS and fisheries, as well as other matters of concern to both countries.
3. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister noted with satisfaction the useful exchanges at Ministerial and official level since their last meeting, leading to new and closer co-operation in energy, transport, communications, cross-border economic developments and security. They agreed that further improvements in these and other fields should be pursued.
4. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister agreed that the economic, social and political interests of the peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic are inextricably linked, but that the full development of these links has been put under strain by division and dissent in Northern Ireland. In that context they accepted the need to bring forward policies and proposals to achieve peace, reconciliation and stability; and to improve relations between the peoples of the two countries.
5. They considered that the best prospect of attaining these objectives was further development of the unique relationship between the two countries.

6. They accordingly decided to devote their next meeting in London during the coming year to special consideration of the totality of relationships within these islands. For this purpose they have commissioned joint studies, covering a range of issues including possible new institutional structures, citizenship rights, security matters, economic co-operation and measures to encourage mutual understanding.

7. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister recalled the statements issued on behalf of their Governments on 4 December about the situation in the H Blocks and reiterated the hope that the statement made by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 4 December would provide the basis on which the issues could be resolved.

8. The discussions were regarded by both sides as extremely constructive and significant.

10 Downing Street
Whitehall SW1

8 December 1980.