

CONFIDENTIAL



Ireland.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 September 1979

Sean Roy,

Political Progress in Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister has seen the minute by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, dated 31 August, on this subject.

The Prime Minister has noted that she sees no possibility of opening up discussions with Mr. Lynch in the way proposed in the final paragraph of Mr. Atkins' minute. The Irish Prime Minister would assume that the line being taken had been approved by Cabinet, whereas, the Prime Minister points out, it has not yet been discussed in Cabinet. The most that can be said to Mr. Lynch at present is that HMG are preparing the way for effective local government in Northern Ireland. To follow the other recommendations in Mr. Atkins' minute would be to sound too much as though Northern Ireland was being treated as a colony rather than as part of the United Kingdom.

I am sending copies of this letter to George Walden (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), to the Private Secretaries to the other members of OD, and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Michael Alexander

Roy Harrington, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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