



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

31 October 1983

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Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 22 October.

I do not believe that any meeting between myself and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland can be interpreted in the way you suggest. Good relations between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland are in the interests of all the peoples of both our countries. The pursuit of such relations in no way affects the constitutional status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

I cannot therefore accept that any talks which I might have with Dr. FitzGerald give support for the belief that the United Kingdom Government is seeking to change that status against the wishes of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland. There is no question of that. Nor do I think that the possibility of misunderstanding or misrepresentation should prevent such exchanges at Prime Ministerial or other levels as seem right to the United Kingdom Government. Rather, I would hope that such  
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exchanges can be seen for what they are, as normal dealings between neighbouring states.

As your own letter was released to the press I am arranging for my reply to be similarly published.

*Yours  
Raymond*

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The Rt. Hon. James H. Molyneux, J.P., M.P.