

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

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23 December 1981

Dear Mike

... I attach notes on Northern Ireland Office activities and achievements in 1981 and the outlook for 1982, as requested in your letter of 17 December.

Yours sincerely  
Mike Hopkins

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## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Government has stood firm against the terrorist campaign in Northern Ireland.

2. The Security Forces have worked unstintingly to bring terrorists to justice; this year more than 850 people have been charged with terrorist offences in Northern Ireland.
3. The Government stood firm against the hunger strike, declining to give in to the demand for political status or to act under duress.
4. Following the Prime Minister's announcement (in March) of a new electricity tariff policy for Northern Ireland, industrial tariffs have been on a par since June with the highest comparable charges in England and Wales, and from April 1982 domestic tariffs will be in the same relationship.
5. Detailed discussions with the Irish Republic are in train on the possibility of a supply of natural gas to Northern Ireland from Kinsale. These discussions are expected to be completed early in 1982.
6. Miscellaneous measures to assist the economy: Government reviewed the organisation of the industrial development institutions in Northern Ireland and is in the process of setting up a new Department of Economic Development which will include an Industrial Development Board; the Business Opportunities Programme was launched in 1981; an Enterprise zone was set up in Belfast; and the Youth Opportunities Programme provided openings for 10,000 young people.

### OUTLOOK FOR 1982

7. The defeat of terrorism will continue to be the first





priority. Sustained determined effort, operating always within the law, rather than dramatic shifts of course are required.

8. The Government will try to make progress next year in providing opportunities for the people in Northern Ireland to have a greater say in the administration of the Province.

9. Priority on public expenditure will continue to be given to the Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment programmes in order to promote the economy; and within the social and environmental programmes, to housing.

10. There will be detailed consultation about a Youth Training Programme (comparable with the GB YPP) to tailor requirements to Northern Ireland's needs.

11. The reorganisation of the Governmental structure in Northern Ireland will continue with the setting up of the Department of Finance and Personnel, and the Department of Economic Development.

NB. The improved relationship between the UK and the Republic could be represented as an achievement during the year, but for the Prime Minister to single it out risks intensifying Unionist suspicions that the discussions are more significant than the Government has claimed and in particular that they are intended to lead to Irish unity.



23 DEC 1981

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