



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

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Dear Charles,

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Anglo-Irish Relations

The Prime Minister has no doubt seen Dublin telnos 689 and 690 reporting the text of a speech which the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr Barry, delivered on the evening of 23 November in Clonmel, and the document which Mr Barry issued at the same time. In the case of the document, the telegram does not make it as clear as the version which was published in the "Irish Times" of 24 November that Mr Barry's aim was to stress the areas of accord between the Prime Minister's statements and that Chapter of the Forum Report (5.2) which the Irish Government has all along presented as containing the essence of the Irish position.

Although Mr Barry had some sharp things to say at the beginning of his speech about the press conferences given by the Prime Minister and the Northern Ireland Secretary, it is clear that his intention was to calm matters down and to denounce the cruder attempts of Mr Haughey and the more extreme nationalists to undermine the discussions which have been going on between our two Governments. Mr Barry's speech has had quite a reasonable reception in the Irish press. The "Irish Times" took his intentions at face value and in its presentation and comment was generally supportive of the Irish Government's efforts, although it made no attempt to hide the dismay felt in constitutional nationalist circles on both sides of the border. The "Irish Independent" declared that Mr Barry's were brave words which needed saying. The "Irish Press" on the other hand carried a rather churlish article which criticised what it called an ill-fated attempt to mount a counter-attack on the Irish Government's critics.

Although tempers have by no means cooled yet in Dublin you may think it worth drawing the Prime Minister's attention to this effort by the Foreign Minister to start the fence-mending process. The Tanaiste is also reported by the "Irish Times" as saying that the Irish Cabinet will be considering over the next few days how to set right the damage caused by the row which followed the Summit. He is reported as saying that the trouble must be healed as there is no alternative to dialogue between the two sides in finding a solution to the Northern problem.

Yours ever,
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