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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



28/8/84
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Timothy Flesher Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
SW1

15th August 1984

Dear Tim,

KINSALE GAS *attached*

Your letter of 14 August conveyed the Prime Minister's agreement to the draft message to Dr FitzGerald, subject to some minor amendments and sought advice on when the reply should be sent bearing in mind current influences on Anglo/Irish relations.

As Mr Prior indicated before Sunday's events there is everything to be said for an early reply. There are already signs that Dublin may be misreading our likely response. Delay of more than a few days runs the risk that the Irish will be encouraged to think their tactics have succeeded and that we are searching afresh for some way of proceeding with the project. If this gained ground the eventual delivery of our message would cause added difficulty.

It is also essential that this piece of business should be concluded before Mr Prior meets Mr Barry on 31 August and to ensure that there is no residue for the Prime Minister's meeting with Dr FitzGerald on 3 September.

Our judgement therefore is that a reply should be given no later than Monday 20 August and if the remainder of the week is quiescent Friday 17 August should not be ruled out. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, having consulted the Ambassador, agree this advice.

I am sending copies to the Private Secretaries to Members of E(A), to Colin Budd (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Stuart Eldon (Baroness Young's Office FCO) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours Sincerely
Neil Ward.*

N D WARD

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

C. HMT CS, HMT
D/N D/TPRT
SO Ld Gowrie
WO +below
DOE
LPSO
DTI
CDL
D/M
MAFF

16 August 1984

KINSALE GAS

Thank you for your letter of 15 August. I am grateful also for Stuart Eldon's letter of the same date.

I have consulted the Prime Minister about the timing of her reply to Dr. FitzGerald. She agrees that, subject to any intervening developments, this should issue on Monday, 20 August.

I should be grateful if Stuart Eldon could arrange accordingly.

I am sending copies of this letter to Stuart Eldon (Baroness Young's Office, FCO), to the Private Secretaries to the members of E(A) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(DAVID BARCLAY)

N.D. Ward, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

JSC

PRIME MINISTER

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KINSALE GAS

WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED FCO AND NIO ADVICE ON THE TIMING OF YOUR
REPLY TO DR FITZGERALD.

MR PRIOR'S VIEW, WITH WHICH OUR AMBASSADOR AGREES, IS THAT
THE REPLY SHOULD NOT BE LONG DELAYED. IN ORDER TO ALLOW A
LITTLE TIME FOR THE PRESENT ANGLO-IRISH DIFFICULTIES TO SUBSIDE,
5-THEY SUGGEST MONDAY 20 AUGUST - BUT NO LATER.

CONTENT FOR YOUR REPLY TO ISSUE ON THAT DAYN SUBJECT TO ANY
INTERVENING DEVELOPMENTS?

DAVID BARCLAY
15 AUGUST 198

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 August 1984

Dear Tim

KINSALE GAS

You sent me a copy of your letter of 14 August to Graham Sandiford about the Prime Minister's reply to Dr Fitzgerald's message on Kinsale Gas.

It seems desirable to us, and to HM Ambassador in Dublin, that the Prime Minister's reply should be handed over not later than Monday 20 August in order to put an end to the current uncertainty about the project. This would meet the Prime Minister's wish that we should not give such an unpalatable message when tempers are inflamed by last Sunday's events in Belfast, while leaving a reasonable interval before the two leaders meet on 3 September. The necessary arrangements have been made to do this once we know that you are content.

I am sending copies of this letter to Graham Sandiford, the other Private Secretaries to members of E(A) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

yours ever

Stanley Eldon

S G Eldon
PS/Lady Young

Tim Flesher Esq
10 Downing Street
Whitehall

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