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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

23 December 1985

Dear Mr. Cusack

Thank you for your letter of 9 December which covered the resolution which the Alliance Council has passed on the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I have looked carefully at your resolution and will, if I may, comment on it in detail.

I am encouraged to note that your Council will strive to ensure that the Agreement is given a fair chance to work for the benefit of both sides of the Community in Northern Ireland. For the Government's part, I can repeat our assurance that we will implement the Agreement with imagination and determination for the benefit of both parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We have now, of course, had the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference, which Tom King and Peter Barry jointly chaired. I understand it was a constructive meeting. As you may have seen from the joint press statement released afterwards, the Conference discussed security co-operation between the two Governments, with particular attention to methods of improving the existing coordination of security activities on both sides of the border. The Irish side stated that Garda resources had recently been increased in border areas and that arrangements were being made for deployment of Task Force Units to supplement, as required, the work of locally based personnel. The Conference also, for example, discussed the development of a programme of measures to improve relations between the security forces and the minority community in Northern Ireland. In particular the Chief Constable of the RUC (who attended along with the Garda

SPW

Commissioner) advised the Conference that, like a number of other UK police forces, he would introduce as soon as possible in 1986 a Code of Conduct for his force. I hope therefore you will see this first meeting as an indication of how we intend to make the Agreement work.

Your resolution specifically calls for an open approach to the workings and deliberations of the Intergovernmental Conference. This will be our general practice in future - although obviously there are limits to what can be made public, especially in the area of security. But we intend to be as open as we can.

The second point in your resolution calls for the establishment of a mechanism whereby all Northern Ireland constitutional parties can have an input into the deliberations of the Intergovernmental Conference. As I have made clear, the conference is not a decision making body; decisions on matters relating to the Government of Northern Ireland will continue to be taken by Her Majesty's Government. I fully understand and share your concern that the Government should take into account the views of the constitutional parties on matters discussed in the Conference. We already have channels for achieving this - Parliament, the Assembly, District Councils and through meetings such as those which I and Tom King have had with you. It is in the interests of the people of Northern Ireland that maximum use should be made of these means of communication; and we shall continue to listen carefully to views expressed through them. I hope that Unionist politicians will make use of these channels and I welcome the fact that Alliance will continue to do so.

As for the third point in your resolution, I too very much hope that the constitutional leaders of the nationalist community will respond positively to the opportunities the Agreement offers them to participate more fully in the processes of government in the Province. You may now have seen that the leader of the SDLP declared in the House of

Commons debate on the Agreement that he is prepared to discuss with other parties how the affairs of Northern Ireland might be administered in a manner that is acceptable to both traditions.

Thank you once again for writing. I am grateful to you for your positive, constructive and responsible approach to this Agreement, which I remain convinced offers the best hope we have for making progress in Northern Ireland in the interests of all her people.

I am writing to you separately about the current terrorist campaign against police stations.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

John Cushnahan, Esq.

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

GR'S PPS?



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

19 December 1985

Dear Charles

LETTERS FROM MR JOHN CUSHNAHAN

Under cover of your letter of 13 December, you enclosed copies of two letters to the Prime Minister from John Cushnahan dealing with the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the current terrorist campaign against police stations respectively. You asked for early draft replies, and these are attached. (On balance, since Mr Cushnahan wrote two separate letters, and they deal with different subject matters, it seems best for the Prime Minister to reply separately to each).

Copies of this letter and its enclosures go to Colin Budd (FCO) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

J A Daniell

J A DANIELL

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
<p>J Cushnahan Esq The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland 88 University Street BELFAST BT7 1HE</p> <p>(Full Postal Address)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>SM2AAF</i></p>	<p>cc:-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland</p> <p>(Full Address, if Necessary)</p>

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY PRIME MINISTER
(Name of Signatory)

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I am encouraged to note that your Council will strive to ensure that the Agreement is given a fair chance to work for the benefit of both sides of the community in Northern Ireland. For the Government's part, I can repeat our assurance that we will implement the Agreement with imagination and determination for the benefit of both parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We have now, of course, had the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference, which Tom King and Peter Barry jointly chaired. I understand it was a constructive meeting. As you may have seen from the joint press statement released afterwards, the Conference discussed security co-operation between the two Governments, with particular attention to methods of improving the existing

E.R.

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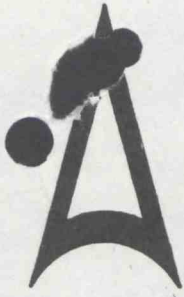
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As for the third point in your resolution, I too very much hope that the constitutional leaders of the nationalist community will respond positively to the opportunities the Agreement offers them to participate more fully in the processes of government in the Province. You may now have seen that the leader of the SDLP declared in the House of Commons debate on the Agreement that he is prepared to discuss with other parties how the affairs of Northern Ireland might be administered in a manner that is acceptable to both traditions.

Thank you once again for writing. I am grateful to you for your positive, constructive and responsible approach to this Agreement, which I remain convinced offers the best hope we have for making progress in Northern Ireland in the interests of all her people.

I am writing to you separately about the current terrorist campaign against police stations.

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**THE ALLIANCE PARTY
OF
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Headquarters:
88 UNIVERSITY STREET
BELFAST BT7 1HE

Telephone:
Belfast 224274/5

6th February 1986

JC/JE/P.L.

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher P.M.
10 Downing Street
LONDON

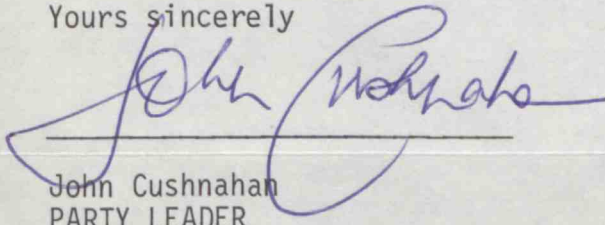
RH/2
RPS

Dear Prime Minister

Many thanks for your letter of 23rd December. I must say I was disappointed that you felt unable to agree to the establishment of a mechanism whereby all Northern Ireland Constitutional Parties could have an input into the deliberations of the Intergovernmental Conference. Although you are correct in pointing out that channels of communication do already exist I believe, had you agreed to a more formal mechanism, it would have gone a long way to assuaging some of the genuine fears of the Unionist Community. (It would also have given the Alliance Party a stronger platform in the recent elections). Although it is likely that Unionist Political Leaders would probably adopt a negative approach to a formal consultative role the Government's hand would have been considerably strengthened by making such an offer. I would once again ask you to reconsider this proposal.

I am also concerned about the total lack of dialogue between Northern Ireland Political Parties. I believe that if there is to be any hope for devolution then only you as Prime Minister can take the initiative. The Unionists have got themselves on a hook by refusing to talk to the Secretary of State but they are, however, willing to talk to you. Furthermore, a direct Prime Ministerial involvement in a search for agreed devolved structures would put greater pressure on Northern Ireland Political Parties to talk to one another. I hope you will give consideration to this as well.

Yours sincerely



John Cushnahan
PARTY LEADER

John Cushnahan
18/2



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SM

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 February 1986

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from John Cushnahan to which I should be grateful to receive an early draft reply. You will wish to consider, in reply, whether the Prime Minister should offer Mr. Cushnahan a further meeting.

C D POWELL

Jim Daniell, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office

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SM

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 February 1986

We have just received your letter of 6 February to the Prime Minister. I shall bring it to her attention as soon as possible and I am sure that she will want to reply personally.

C D POWELL

John Cushnahan, Esq.

John CUSHNAHAN

20/12



LB

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 December 1985

I enclose copies of two letters to the Prime Minister from John Cushnahan of the Alliance Party to both of which I should be grateful for early draft replies.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosures to Colin Budd (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

CHARLES POWELL

Jim Daniell Esq
Northern Ireland Office.

LB



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 December 1985

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your two letters of 9 December. I shall draw these to her attention as soon as possible and I am sure she will wish to reply personally.

CHARLES POWELL

John Cushnahan, Esq.

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**THE ALLIANCE PARTY
OF
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Headquarters:
88 UNIVERSITY STREET
BELFAST BT7 1HE

Telephone:
Belfast 24274/5

JC/ER/P.L.

9th December 1985

R12

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher P.M.
10 Downing Street,
LONDON

Dear Prime Minister,

Our Party has discussed the question of the Anglo Irish Agreement and appended is a resolution which was passed at our Policy Making Body. The resolution was passed by 133 votes to 2 against with one abstention.

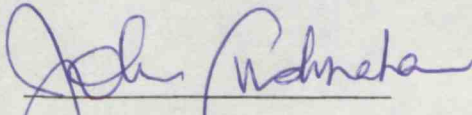
I hope you will peruse its contents and take note of some of the suggestions contained therein.

I believe if the Government in concert with the Irish Government were to give consideration to ending total secrecy and introducing a mechanism for consultation for all Northern Ireland political parties to have an input into the conference, that both these steps would go a long way to assuaging Unionist fears.

Furthermore it is imperative that the Irish Government pressurize the SDLP to make reciprocal gestures to the Unionist Community.

I hope you may find the above information useful and can I also take the opportunity of thanking you most sincerely for the courtesy and consideration extended to me on my recent visit to Downing Street.

Yours faithfully,



John Cushman
PARTY LEADER

"That this Council, which accepts the authority of Parliament in Westminster, will strive to ensure that it is given a fair chance to work for the benefit of both sides of our divided community.

This council believes that the party leadership should continue to seek:-

- (i) An end to total secrecy and its replacement with a more open approach to the workings and deliberations of the Inter-Governmental Conference.
- (ii) The establishment of a mechanism whereby all Northern Ireland Constitutional parties have an input into the deliberations of the Inter-Governmental Conference.
- (iii) Prompt and significant reciprocal gestures from the SDLP in order to assist political progress in Northern Ireland.

This council further believes that as the Government and Parliament are intent on implementing this agreement continued rejection of it will lead to a major confrontation which would have catastrophic consequences for the well being of Northern Ireland and its people.

PROPOSED BY JOHN CUSHNAHAN

SECONDED BY ADDIE MORROW