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British Embassy  
Dublin

26 June 1996

John Holmes Esq  
Prime Minister's Office  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

NBPM

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JH 26/6.

Dear John,

**BILATERAL WITH THE TAOISEACH (MARK II)**

1. I have just returned from a brief tour in the West to find your faxes recording two conversations between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach in Florence.

Northern Ireland

2. Part of my tour was spent at Sean Donlon's country home near Limerick. In the course of Sunday morning (23 June) the Taoiseach telephoned from a flight between Florence and Malta. Sean told me that they discussed the possibility of an early restoration of the ceasefire and how to react to it, believing that an announcement might be made that afternoon when Gerry Adams was addressing a rally. The Taoiseach suggested that the Irish Government should tell Sinn Fein they would be admitted to the talks in Belfast only if both they and the IRA were to sign up in advance to the Mitchell Principles. His argument was that if Sinn Fein and the IRA were virtually identical, and Gerry Adams had already publicly supported the principles, then in logic it should not be too difficult for the IRA to do so. Sean and I discussed this at some length, concluding that, however desirable, the IRA would be most unlikely to sign up, and thus Sinn Fein would be excluded from the talks for the foreseeable future.

3. Since then there has of course been no announcement about a possible ceasefire. I shall call on Sean tomorrow to discuss developments since the weekend.

East-West Relations

4. I certainly have not forgotten your injunction that I should put forward some ideas about joint projects. I plan to do this in the next week or two in a despatch following up President Robinson's visit. Before launching suggestions, I want to ensure support in advance. I rather doubt however that

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FROM THE PRIME MINISTER



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any of the areas mentioned by the Taoiseach (transport, drugs and crime) are suitable for high profile projects. They are rather the subject of increasingly close co-operation.

John Balfour Esq  
Private Secretary to the  
Prime Minister  
14 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AA

*Yours ever,*

*Veronica*

V E Sutherland  
HM AMBASSADOR

cc: Martin Howard, NIO  
William Ehrman Esq, FCO  
Jan Polley, Cabinet Office

The Secretary of State has noted the message conveyed in  
no of 24 June reporting on the Prime Minister's discussion  
with the Taoiseach in the margins of the European Council  
Council on 22 June.

He was pleased by, and was real value in the relationship  
report in the relationship between the Prime Minister and  
the Taoiseach displayed in your letter. It is a similar  
relationship now exists between the Taoiseach and  
himself, although the Taoiseach is a more reserved, dignified and  
taciturn character.

The Secretary of State has noted the message conveyed in  
the Taoiseach on the subject of a final agreement. He  
believes that they should be able to reach an agreement  
agreement that no final should not include a condition of  
that being entered by the Taoiseach by the Taoiseach  
agreement. He will obviously give due regard to this  
topic, possibly drawing on work that was carried out in the  
aftermath of the Framework Document but it will need to  
take account of this particular sensitivity.

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