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From: Philip Barton  
Date: 29 January 1997

**PRIME MINISTER**

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cc: Mr Holmes

**NORTHERN IRELAND: NORTH REPORT: IRISH VIEWS**

The Taoiseach's office called this afternoon to say that he wanted to touch base with you on the telephone at some point before the weekend. They then called later this evening to ask that we convey a message to you, as it would not be possible for him to speak to you on the telephone tonight.

The Taoiseach wanted you to know that he understood Patrick Mayhew would be making a statement after publication of the North Report tomorrow. The press were speculating that this would establish a period of consultation. The Irish Government's view was that there should be speedy action on the report, ahead of this year's marching season. Their over-riding concern was to have steps in place to prevent a re-run of last year only worse. They hoped that the consultation period might therefore be as short as two weeks.

I promised to pass this message to you. The Taoiseach's office did not think that he would still want to speak to you on the telephone, although this was not entirely clear.

The Irish position is unsurprising and does not affect the conclusion reached by NI yesterday.

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The NIO have today briefed the Irish Government in general terms on the contents of the North Report. They will let them know the thrust of our response shortly before Patrick Mayhew makes his statement tomorrow.

*Philip*

**PHILIP BARTON**

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