

CONFIDENTIAL *file*

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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

17 March 1997

*Dear Ken,***TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH THE TAOISEACH**

Thank you for your letter of 14 March, offering first thoughts on the telephone conversation between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, and draft points on which both Governments could draw in response to those sent to me by Paddy Teahon.

We discussed this on the telephone over the weekend. The Prime Minister did not want the Taoiseach to give the impression of the two Governments cooking up initiatives behind the backs of the parties. You saw the attached letter which I sent to Paddy Teahon, setting out a minimal line for the Taoiseach to use, which would not cause problems for us. When I spoke to Paddy Teahon about this, he said that we could take it our approach was agreed, unless we heard to the contrary. He did not contact me further, and I assume that the Taoiseach will not depart from an approach on these lines.

As you know, I have made clear to Paddy Teahon that we were not particularly amused that the Taoiseach bounced on us several proposals in this kind of way. He has not attempted to argue. I deduce from this, and one or two other comments, that he himself is embarrassed that the Taoiseach made these proposals to us without warning either from him to me or in the IGC. I suspect that, if he had not been away himself from Dublin that day, the Taoiseach might not have spoken as he did. Certainly he has made no attempt to defend the Taoiseach's proposals or to press on us the form of words which came over in the fax to me in his name the following day. Indeed, I even suspect that the fax was from Wally Kirwan, not him.

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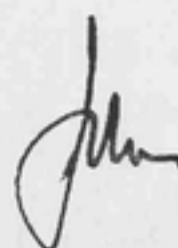


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I am copying this letter to William Ehrman (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office), Sir John Kerr (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

*Yours ever*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'John Holmes', written in a cursive style.

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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