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From the Private Secretary

9 May 1997

*Dear Dáiríoch,*

**VISIT OF THE TAOISEACH, 8 MAY: EAST/WEST ISSUES**

... One of the main themes discussed when the Taoiseach called on the Prime Minister on 8 May was East/West issues – i.e. matters of common interest between the government of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, outside the context of Northern Ireland. I attach a copy of the statement which the Taoiseach made earlier in the week.

The Prime Minister welcomed the strengthening of bilateral links, particularly between respective departmental officials and Ministers. Departments should look at opportunities for cooperation across the whole range of government activity, and not only those points highlighted in the Taoiseach's statement. Early meetings between British and Irish officials and Ministers, to establish personal contacts, would be helpful. The Cabinet Office will be calling an early meeting of members of the Official Committee on Anglo-Irish Relations to co-ordinate this exercise.

I am copying this letter to Private Secretaries of other members of the Cabinet, to the Private Secretary to the Minister without Portfolio, and to Sir Robin Butler.

*Yours ever,*

JOHN HOLMES

Dominick Chilcott Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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