

FROM: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
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cc - JP
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John Holmes Esq.
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

7 May 1997

Dear John,

MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH: 8 MAY 1997

1. The Prime Minister will meet the Taoiseach at 1600 on 8 May. My Secretary of State and the Foreign Secretary will be present: the Tanaiste will also attend. This letter attaches lines to take and a draft press line.

Objectives

2. The objectives for the meeting might be to:
 - establish good relationships with the Taoiseach and the Tanaiste;
 - assure the Irish of the value which we place on close co-operation with them;
 - reinforce the two governments' rejection of violence and their shared position on the talks process and the terms of entry for Sinn Fein;
 - underline the two governments' shared determination to bring about a cease-fire;

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Likely Irish concerns

3. The Taoiseach, facing an election which seems likely now to take place in early June, is vulnerable to criticisms from Fianna Fail that he lost the last cease-fire, inherited from them, and is not doing enough now to bring about a restoration. Against the background of these preoccupations, the Taoiseach can be expected to press for the two governments to inject new momentum into the talks when they resume on 3 June.

4. [redacted] the Taoiseach is considering giving the talks one month to make progress, and then putting a Frameworks-style solution to referenda North and South. This would have extremely limited chances of success, and if it is raised the Prime Minister might instead encourage the Taoiseach to concentrate on the current talks as the best way to achieve the solution that both governments want.

I don't think this is really true - he is not as naive as that

The Taoiseach may urge specific joint action on four fronts - namely, decommissioning; a timeframe for the talks; an early Summit meeting; and the two governments pressing ahead with Strand Three issues. Short lines to take on each are included in the speaking note: the Prime Minister should avoid detailed discussion during this courtesy call if at all possible.

Other Issues

In recent speeches the Taoiseach has highlighted the importance of Unionist consent to any future agreement. If the meeting moves onto matters of substance, given that Mr Bruton has taken this forward position, the Prime Minister could usefully probe whether the Irish government would support the

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amendment of Articles 2 and 3 ahead of a political settlement, which is the logical corollary of the Taoiseach's position. It would be a significant confidence-building measure for Unionists.

Lines to take on Bloody Sunday, Roisin McAliskey and parades are included in the speaking note.

Public Presentation

Both governments will want to present the meeting as giving new impetus to peace and the talks process. A draft press line is attached at Annex B which could form the basis of briefing the press or a joint statement.

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No - best avoided.

I am copying this to Dominick Chilcott (FCO), Veronica Sutherland in Dublin, and Jan Polley in Sir Robin Butler's office.

Yours ever,

Ken

W K LINDSAY

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