

Aps\ahern mfj

DRAFT LETTER TO BERTIE AHERN

Thank you for your letter of 2 May. I am very grateful for your congratulations and best wishes.

As you know, I attach the highest importance to Britain's relations with Ireland. I want the British and Irish Governments to work closely together on Europe, on the search for peace in Northern Ireland and more generally. I am determined to start a new and more constructive chapter in our relations with the rest of Europe. Strengthened co-operation with Ireland is a key part of this.

I am also determined to give new impetus to the search for peace in Northern Ireland. I paid my first visit there as Prime Minister last week. I am convinced that we must re-double our efforts to find a solution. I hope rapid progress can be made when the talks restart on 3 June.

I know you are just starting an election campaign in Ireland. Having just completed one here, you have my best wishes for the gruelling days ahead of you.