



Foreign & Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

See letter at R 30/1
L29
12/2.
→ 1. LHS
2. JEHy in 3/2.

Only worth doing if there is another good reason to be in York on these days.

It's 2/3 days before Labour Party Conf so NO. KG 4/3.

29 January 1998

Dear John,

British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body

You asked for advice in responding to David Winnick's invitation to the Prime Minister to address the next UK meeting of the British-Irish Inter-parliamentary Body in York on 22-23 September.

We recommend that the Prime Minister agree in principle to accept this invitation, subject to confirmation nearer the time, in the light of developments in the Northern Ireland peace process. It is customary for a senior Minister from the host country to address the body and answer questions. Irish Taoisigh regularly avail of this opportunity, but no UK Prime Minister has yet done so. The Northern Ireland Secretary spoke at the last session in London in December and you will recall that the Prime Minister gave an on the record briefing to Irish journalists who were covering the meeting.

By September, the results of the current phase of the Northern Ireland peace process should be known and referenda may well have been held to endorse the outcome. The meeting could thus provide a useful opportunity for the Prime Minister to outline future policy on Northern Ireland in the light of that outcome. It would also demonstrate the importance the Government attaches to the work of the Body, whose role and composition may well change as part of an agreed settlement.

The NIO agree.

I am copying this letter to Ken Lindsay in the Northern Ireland Office and HM Ambassador, Dublin.

yours etc,
Dominick

(Dominick Chilcott)
Private Secretary

John Holmes Esq CMG
10 Downing Street

REM