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Óifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

13 May 1995

Dr. John Alderdice,
Alliance Party.

Dear John,

You may be aware that in my Address to the Annual Dinner of the CBI Northern Ireland on 12 April and more recently in the Dáil on 25 April, I stated that I would shortly be inviting all the relevant political parties in Northern Ireland to participate in bilateral talks with the Irish Government on an open agenda.

I believe there is now a unique opportunity for all of us to shape a settlement which will honourably accommodate all traditions on this island.

I believe the will to do so is present on all sides. We need only to find the best way. The key to achieving that is dialogue on all issues and on every level.

I greatly welcome the initiative taken by political parties in Northern Ireland to review the process of dialogue among themselves.

I would like to be sure that the Irish Government's role in the search for an agreed settlement can be as constructive and productive as possible and will be informed by a first-hand and fully up-to-date knowledge of the current positions of all the relevant parties in Northern Ireland.

For that reason, I would like to invite you to meet with the Irish Government for an exchange of views on the basis of a fully open agenda. I would propose, if that is agreeable to you, that

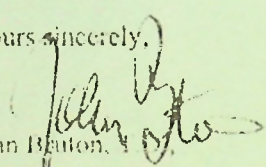


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the first meeting could be devoted predominantly to a discussion on the policies, views and concerns of your party so that all future dialogue can take those positions into consideration as fully as possible.

I very much look forward to hearing from you. I am writing in similar terms to other leaders of political parties in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,


John Bruton,
Taoiseach