

DRAFT LETTER FOR SIGNATURE BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO: develop

Albert Reynolds TD
Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Dublin 2

September 1993

I was very grateful for your letter of 7 September. Like you, I have reflected very carefully on the matters with which it deals.

I agree with what you say about achievement of peace. A genuine and lasting end to violence in Northern Ireland would indeed be a historic breakthrough. The revolting sectarian killings by Loyalists recent days, and the continuing PIRA attacks, are just the latest reminders of what is at stake.

I am certainly prepared to work hard to find ways of advancing achievement of peace. As you know, I believe that any such possibilities have to be examined and assessed very hard-headedly to see whether they will actually deliver the objectives which we both so much desire.

During our private discussion on 16 June, I said to you frankly that the text then before us would not run as it stood. In our judgement it would produce a backlash which would undermine any possibility of sustaining a cessation of violence, and I would have no hope of getting it through the House of Commons. But I was ready to agree without commitment that Sir Robin Butler and John Chilcot should meet Dermot Nally and Sean O hUiginn to explore the sort of principles which we might be able to consider. They have now had three meetings.

I am happy to confirm that I am content for that work to continue, and the Liaison Group of officials which followed the Intergovernmental Conference on 10 September, now tasked to work on a Joint Framework Document for the talks, provides the opportunity. Its joint heads (not the other members) can use

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their discussions of the text of such a document to develop language which could also be used to address the key difficulties in the Joint Declaration. While I cannot yet say whether it might be possible for us to agree the terms of an understanding at our own next meeting, we need to see how your team might translate your reaction to the discussion of principles in the Butler/Nally Group and this further work by the Liaison Group heads into a further version of the text. We can then to form a judgement on the likely acceptability of that both to those with whom your intermediaries have been in contact and to the UK Government and Parliament.

I do not think we need take a view now that peace must come before there can be successful Talks. We do not yet know whether peace on acceptable terms is deliverable, and the 1992 Talks achieved much without peace having then been achieved.

Against this background I was most grateful for your recent affirmations of support for the Talks process. But I entirely understand your reason for writing, and readily agree that important work being undertaken by the Butler/Nally Group should continue, in the way I have suggested.

I look forward to discussing these issues at our next meeting.

Roderic Lyne
RODERIC LYNE
8 September 1993

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