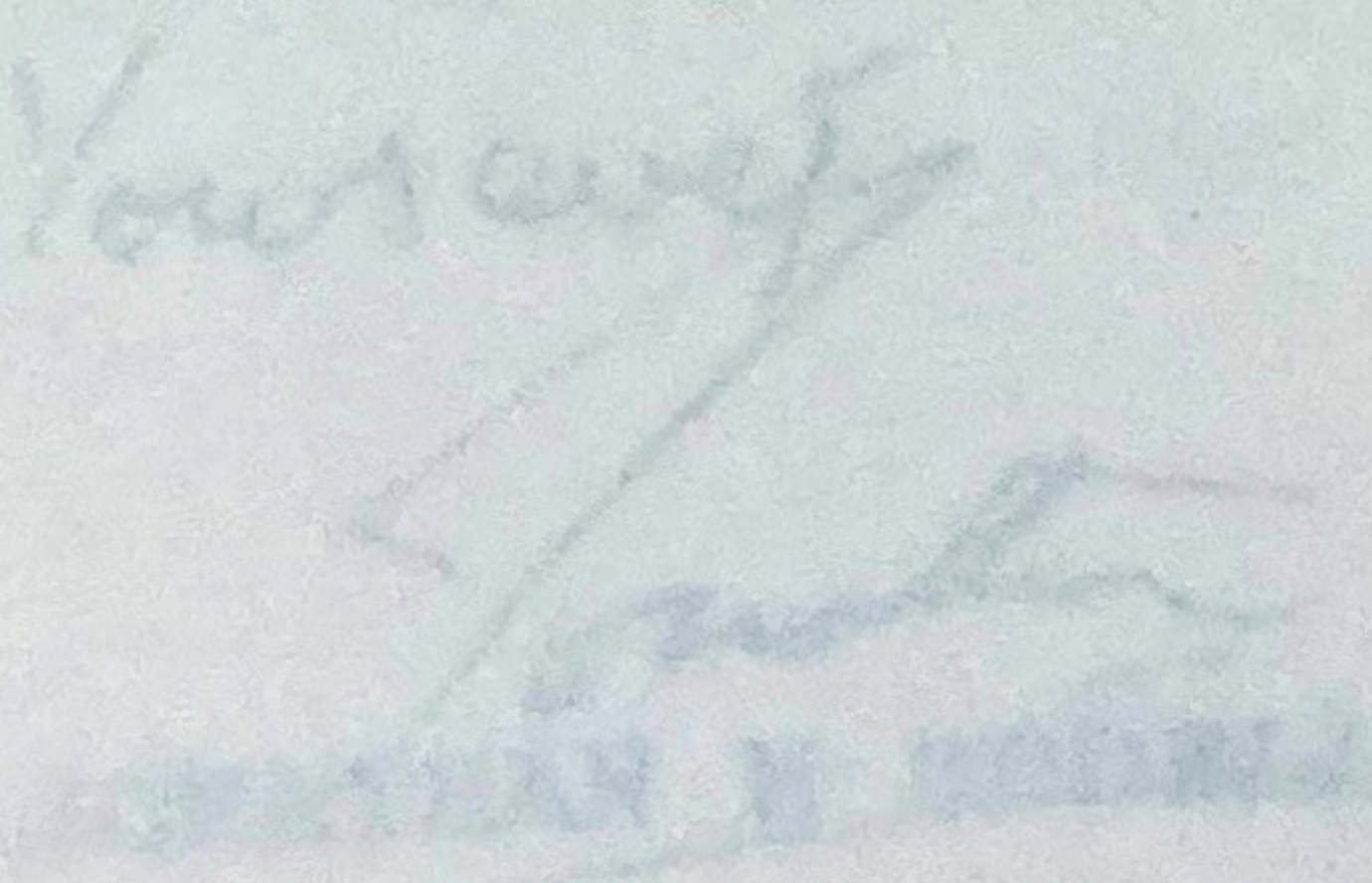


POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

- HMG remains firmly committed to seeking a widely acceptable political accommodation which would take account of the three key sets of relationships; those within Northern Ireland, those within the island of Ireland and those between the British and Irish Governments.
- HMG remains determined to promote further political dialogue towards a comprehensive settlement. HMG believes that the best way forward lies in the Talks process involving all the four main constitutional political parties in NI, and the British and Irish Governments. This commitment to dialogue is shared by the Irish Government.
- Talks began in 1991 and moved into a new phase in 1992. Strand I involved discussion of the relationships within Northern Ireland. Strand II began in London on 6 July 1992 involving HMG, the four main NI constitutional parties (as in Strand I) and the Irish Government, under the independent chairmanship of Sir Ninian Stephen, a former Governor General of Australia.
- When the round table Talks ended in November 1992, the participants agreed that, 'While at this time there is no basis to agree a settlement, they have identified and discussed most, if not all the elements which would comprise an eventual settlement; they developed a clear understanding of each other's positions; and established a constructive dialogue on ways in which an accommodation might be reached on some of the key issues which divide them'. They went on to agree that further dialogue was not only desirable but necessary. The Independent Chairman said that he believed the objective of the Talks remained valid and achievable.

- 15/50FS (S)
15/Mr. Angram (L, E, 200)
- Although round table discussions have not resumed, the Talks process is continuing. Private bilateral discussions are taking place with three of the four main constitutional parties (UDUP have declined to participate). The British and Irish Governments are also exploring issues of mutual interest, including constitutional issues.
 - The Secretary of State has a rational hope that the Talks process will succeed. There is a unanimous acceptance that the status quo is not a viable option - everyone wants a settlement.
 - No artificial time limits have been set and any further dialogue need not be in the same format as before. Talks are a means to an end and not an end in themselves.
 - The British Government is in a position to offer a judgement on where convergence amongst the parties might be found. In that context, the Government would be willing, if others would find it helpful, to bring forward proposals to provide focus and direction for new Talks once they begin.
 - The British and Irish Governments are both clear that Sinn Fein exclude themselves from the political Talks process by their continued support for violence.

Attached is an advance copy of a letter from Congressman Joe Kennedy
It has been a conscious effort to be
more responsible on matters such as Northern Ireland and it is
probably worth trying to encourage him towards the 'straight and
narrow'. There is no doubt that our efforts with Senator Ted
Kennedy over the years have paid handsome dividends.
We will, of course, pass on Congressman Kennedy's original letter to
you together with a draft reply as soon as possible.

Yours truly

ANTHONY N. RUMBALL