

**Dermot Nally
Papers**

UCDA P254/59

15 November, 1993

Ofíóg an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

The Right Hon. Mr. John Major, M.P.,
Prime Minister.

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter. Your Private Secretary Mr Roderick Lyne has explained the background to it, and I am sure will have informed you in more detail of my position.

I was glad to hear that the door had not been slammed on a peace initiative, and that the negative reports from meetings between our officials did not fully represent or reflect your intentions.

I am convinced that a major opportunity for peace exists and that it can be brought to a successful conclusion. The text has been gone through line by line. Any recent additions we have made all go in the one direction, of providing more balance to the Unionist point of view. The additions have been incorporated on the advice of Archbishop Eames. I may add that both the Archbishop and John Alderdice brought me messages from Molyneux saying that while he could not publicly support what we are at he would not oppose it either. There is no doubt whatever that there is a very strong desire among Unionists and Northern Protestants for peace, which has been communicated to me.

I would like to emphasise that our discussions on this initiative began long before there was any public mention of Hume/Adams. I have not given you their report, and I tried in every way possible to create for you the necessary distance, so that you could consider the proposals which I put to you, which were originally drafted along time ago with some input from John Hume in my own office. They have been considerably refined since. You have said publicly on a number of occasions that you had no difficulty in principle in listening to proposals that the Irish Government might put forward.

Peace has overwhelming public support, as reflected in opinion polls. I am not proposing anything that would compromise either Government or be inconsistent with our respective principles. It is a very small price to pay for the end of violence. The Provisional IRA/Sinn Féin are being asked to accept principles they have never accepted before. There is no question of any victory for them.

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You have expressed concern about a possible Loyalist backlash. Yet they are on record as saying that their violence is purely reactive, and that their violence would stop, once the Provisionals stopped. Archbishop Eames has independent private confirmation that that is the position.

When I suggested that sooner or later there would be public debate about the merits of the proposals, I was simply acknowledging a political reality, which I referred to at our meeting last June. I hasten to add that we have strongly urged the SDLP not to publish the proposals, either now or in the future, as obviously this would make it virtually impossible to make use of them in any form.

In conclusion I would urge you to consider with your colleagues the historic opportunity that exists to end the cycle of violence in Ireland once and for all, and to consider that a formula of words could save many lives over the next few years. I am firmly of the view that we can make it work.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Taoiseach.