

FILE 5

83/92/93



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

PS / SOS (L.B.)  
PS / M. ANCRAM (L.B.) 29 December 1993  
PS / PUS (L.B.)  
PS / Mr. FELL  
Mr Thomas  
Mr Bell  
Mr Williams  
Mr Wood (L.B.)

Mr Daniell  
Mr. Mulcahy  
Mr Beeton

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December and for the further letter of 22 December you handed me after our meeting at Hillsborough on Wednesday.

I am finding your arguments increasingly difficult to understand. Where is the evidence that I have "freely given ... joint jurisdiction" over Northern Ireland to the Republic? You produce no evidence - nor can there be any as it has not happened.

Your suggestion that I give the people of Northern Ireland the right of self determination and consent misses the point; they already have it. I have repeatedly made it clear that the Government will abide by the democratic wishes of the people of Northern Ireland. A majority has consistently expressed a wish to stay within the United Kingdom; my Government recognises that wish, respects it and stands fully behind it. There has been no change whatsoever in the constitutional guarantee under which Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom so long as that is the wish of the majority of its people.

Far from betraying the people of Northern Ireland, in the Joint Declaration the Government reaffirms the statutory constitutional guarantee and

states, in the clearest terms, that they

"... will uphold the democratic wish of a greater number of the people of Northern Ireland on the issue of whether they prefer to support the Union or a sovereign united Ireland."

You also expressed concern about paragraph 9 of the Joint Declaration and, in our discussion, suggested that this could alter the parameters of the three stranded talks process, especially Strand 1. That is emphatically not the case. The basis of the talks remains Peter Brooke's statement of 26 March 1991, which set out the ground rules, including what was to be addressed and who was to be involved. Paragraph 9 of the Joint Declaration does not change that basis in any way. It means what it says, no more and no less. It would be remarkable if two friendly neighbouring Governments, each with territory on one island, did not seek to create institutions and structures enabling them and their people to work together in all areas of common interest. As Patrick Mayhew explained, that is wholly Strand 2 business.

As I told you, it is our intention to intensify the talks process, whatever is the reaction to the Joint Declaration. I very much hope you will participate in further talks on the basis of the 26 March 1991 statement. I believe that the Declaration offers the chance, in its own words, to "transform the prospects for building on the progress already made in the talks process, involving the two Governments and the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland."

The Reverend Dr Ian R K Paisley MP

Yours sincerely,  
John H.