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MASTER

10 DOWNING STREET **Filed on:**  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

17 December 1993

*Dear Jonathan*

**PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE TAOISEACH,  
WEDNESDAY 15 DECEMBER 1993**

For good order, I should briefly record the Prime Minister's meeting with the Taoiseach which preceded publication of the Joint Declaration on 15 December.

The meeting was preceded by two telephone conversations on 14 December between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach and a much longer series of conversations that day between Sir Robin Butler and Dr. Martin Mansergh, to finalise the text of the Joint Declaration. It was only at 8p.m. on the Tuesday evening that the Irish finally committed themselves to a meeting on the following morning. The meeting was therefore set up at 15 hours' notice.

The Taoiseach was accompanied to London by the Tanaiste and by the Minister of Justice, Mrs. Geoghegan-Quinn. He also brought a large team of officials. Your Secretary of State, the Cabinet Secretary, and officials from the NIO and the FCO were present on our side.

After the Taoiseach's arrival at 11a.m., the two teams spent about 25 minutes in gentle discussion in the Cabinet Room. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach discussed the way in which the Joint Declaration should be presented, and anticipated support from churchmen, the business community, and the United States government. The Prime Minister described the Statement which he would be making in Parliament. The Taoiseach said that he did not have a clear view of the likely reaction of the Provisionals to the Joint Declaration.

At 11.35a.m. the two Prime Ministers went out into Downing Street to announce that they had reached agreement and would be holding a press conference. The press conference ran from 12.15p.m. until nearly 1 o'clock. The proceedings wound up with a glass of champagne in the Cabinet Office.

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As this letter indicates, this was essentially a public event. There was very little substance to the private discussion. It was the third meeting between the two Prime Ministers in 12 days, and they had covered the ground very thoroughly in their talks in Dublin and Brussels.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

SELECT COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN IRELAND

When I returned from the House of Commons on the afternoon of 16 December, I heard from the Foreign Office that the Taoiseach was expressing concern about the possibility of the Select Committee on Northern Ireland. I have since received a letter from the Foreign Office No. 461.

Anne Stenson

pp RODERIC LYNE

By the time the news reached me, the announcement had been made. However, I should report that I immediately telephoned Martin Mansergh. I reminded him that the Prime Minister had warned the Taoiseach, and I had warned him, in Brussels, that an announcement on a Select Committee was likely to come out soon. We had explained that the Government would need to give its response to the report of the Select Committee on Procedure. Mansergh was pretty relaxed. He recalled the earlier notification. He did not suggest that the Select Committee announcement would have a gravely damaging effect. He saw it as analogous to the further explanation of the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation which the Taoiseach would have given at

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I asked Mansergh to ensure that the Taoiseach knew that the Prime Minister had not received his message until after the announcement had been made.

I am copying this letter by fax to David Blatherwick in Dublin.

RODERIC LYNE

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