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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
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LONDON SW1P 3AJ

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London SW1

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Paul
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- 21/5 19 May 1980

Dear Michael,

Before she meets Mr Haughey on 21 May, the Prime Minister may like to be aware of an exchange of correspondence between my Secretary of State and the Irish Foreign Minister, Mr Lenihan, that took place following Mr Atkins's visit to Dublin last month. I attach copies.

While there is nothing unexpected in Mr Lenihan's letter, it is clearly designed from its timing to set the stage for the coming visit by outlining from his level the basic Irish attitude. It puts forward the main lines of the approach which we would expect Mr Haughey to take, and which are fully dealt with in the briefing which has been assembled for the Prime Minister. The letter does not of course cover the more individual embellishments which the Taoiseach himself may add to the approach.

I am sending copies of this letter to Ian Maxwell (ICO), John Chilcot (Home Office), George Walden (FCO), Brian Norbury (MoD) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours,
R A Harrington

R A Harrington

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COPY (TEXT OF LETTER
PASSED ON BY IRISH
EMBASSY: ORIGINAL
TO FOLLOW)

15 May 1980

Dear Humphrey

Thank you for your letter of 21 April in response to which I would like to say how much I too appreciated meeting you here. Our talks did indeed help to clarify our respective positions and I look forward to their continuance.

I appreciate your raising informally the view which I expressed at our meeting that my Government should be involved in discussions of a devolved administration in Northern Ireland. In this regard I must say that, as you know, our involvement is not particularly or solely related to the process of negotiation which you are at present engaged in with the representatives of certain parties in Northern Ireland, or even to the more general question of relations between both parts of the community there. It flows from history and the realities today and relates also ^{to} the need for structured discussion between our Governments about relations between both parts of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain. These are the dimensions in which we see the talks with your Government and in which we would hope to find a formula for permanent peace and stability, for the benefit of all the people of these islands.

As regards the process in which you are engaged, you are aware that it is not our policy to comment publicly upon developments.

You refer to the risk of extinction of the partial cooperation of the Unionist side from which your efforts have benefited up to now. In any case, however, there is a much more obvious danger of withdrawal by the parties which desire implementation of what we understood to be the bipartisan British objective of executive partnership. You are aware of our conviction, in these circumstances, of the absence of any prospect for lasting success of the negotiation you are engaged in and of our view that, even if it were to lead to an agreed result, this will not provide a conclusive settlement. It is for this reason that we propose

/...

that the issue be lifted to a higher plane between us and that we should discuss in a fundamental way, all three dimensions of the problem.

I look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Lenihan

The Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland



Northern Ireland Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST

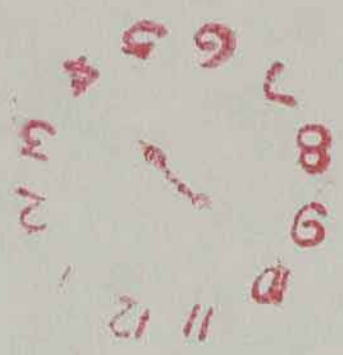
The Hon Brian J Lenihan TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House
DUBLIN

April 1980

I found our discussion on Tuesday very useful, and I am glad to have had the opportunity to get to know you. I am most grateful for all the care that was taken over the arrangements which helped the talks to be such a success. I think we both agreed that regular meetings of this sort are in our common interest, and I look forward to welcoming you in a few months when it is my turn to act as host.

Perhaps I can take this opportunity informally to emphasise a point which I regard as being of the first importance. I respect, though I made clear that I do not agree with, your view that a necessary element in the progress we are trying to make in Northern Ireland would be to involve your own Government in some way in the process. On the basis of my experience in negotiating with the parties involved since I took office, and in particular on the basis of what I learnt at the Conference, I have no doubt whatever that any overt involvement of your Government, or any commitment to such involvement, would extinguish immediately all co-operation from the Unionist side. I urge you to take this into consideration in any future steps which your Government may take, and in particular in any public statements of your own policy.

I look forward to meeting you again before too long.



19 MAY 1980

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Ireland

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Ireland
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RESIDENT CLERK

(*Jeg*)

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FROM DUBLIN 17/1200Z MAY 1980

TO IMMEDIATE F C O DESKEY 190000Z

TELEGRAM NUMBER 152 OF 17 MAY 1980

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BY TEL NO 152: MEETING BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND MR HAUGHEY.

1. THE TAOISEACH ASKED ME TO CALL ON HIM THIS AFTERNON TO DISCUSS HIS MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER IN LONDON NEXT WEEK. HE HAD WITH HIM WALLY AND I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MY COUNSELLOR.
2. MR HAUGHEY OPENED BY EMPHASISING THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE TO HIMSELF, AS A POLITICIAN, OF NEXT WEEK'S MEETING. HE NEEDED TO BE ABLE TO SHOW SOME ACHIEVEMENT FROM IT. MRS THATCHER WAS, HE REMARKED, POISED FOR FRESH ACHIEVEMENTS IN THIS AS IN OTHER FIELDS. HE POINTED TO THE IRANIAN EMBASSY SIEGE, WHICH UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR RESOLUTE ACTION AGAINST TERRORISM ON THE PART OF US ALL AND HAD BEEN AN EXAMPLE TO EVERYONE. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE DAY OF ACTION, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS QUOTE A GREAT TRIUMPH UNQUOTE.
3. ON NORTHERN IRELAND, MR HAUGHEY RECALLED HIS THREE-LEVEL APPROACH:
 - (A) RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTH ~~SEE~~

(B) NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS SEMICOLON

(C) RELATIONS BETWEEN DUBLIN AND LONDON.

FOR NEXT WEEK'S MEETING (C) WAS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT BECAUSE HE HOPED WE COULD RAISE OUR RELATIONS TO A NEW LEVEL OF COOPERATION AND ACHIEVEMENT. THE SITUATION WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND WAS JUST QUOTE BLOCKED, DEAD UNQUOTE. A NEW OVERALL APPROACH WAS REQUIRED IF THERE WAS TO BE ANY PROGRESS. THE BASIC REASON FOR DEAD-LOCK IN NORTHERN IRELAND WAS THE BRITISH GUARANTEE. THERE WAS AN ANOMALY IN MR ATKINS' SAYING THAT HE COULD NOT PUT FORWARD THIS OR THAT PROPOSAL, BECAUSE NORTHERN IRELAND UNIONIST OPINION WOULD NOT ACCEPT IT. HOWEVER SKILLED AND ABLE MR ATKINS WAS, AND HE BELIEVED HIM TO BE BOTH, THE FACT WAS THAT THE UNIONISTS WOULD NOT MOVE SO LONG AS THEY HAD THE GUARANTEE.

4. MR HAUGHEY SAID THAT HE WOULD LIKE THE MEETING TO TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT OUR RELATIONS IN A MORE GENERAL CONTEXT. MOREOVER, IF PROGRESS WAS TO BE MADE, HE NEEDED SOME POLITICAL ADVANCE IN ORDER TO BRING HIS OWN SIDE ALONG WITH HIM, THERE WERE PEOPLE IN QUOTE VERY ENTRENCHED POSITIONS UNQUOTE ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER TOO, NOT LEAST IN HIS OWN PARTY. WHAT HE NEEDED IN FACT WAS SOMETHING ON THE GUARANTEE.

5. I SAID THAT FOR MR HAUGHEY TO GO TO DOWNING STREET WITH A PROPOSAL FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE GUARANTEE WOULD NOT BE WELL RECEIVED. HE IMMEDIATELY BACKED AWAY AND SAID QUITE SPECIFICALLY THAT HE DID NOT WANT CONFRONTATION ON THIS ISSUE. HE HAD IDENTIFIED FOR HIMSELF THE GUARANTEE AS THE STUMBLING BLOCK AND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR WAS SOME WAY OF GETTING ROUND IT; PERHAPS IT WAS POSSIBLE TO CHIP AWAY AT IT, OR EVEN ADD TO IT. IDEALLY HE WOULD LIKE THE GUARANTEE TOTALLY WITHDRAWN; THIS WAS WHAT PERMITTED PEOPLE LIKE IAN PAISLEY TO BE SO OBDURATE, AND IF IT WERE REMOVED THE SITUATION WOULD BECOME FLUID AND FLEXIBLE. I REPEATED THAT WITHDRAWAL OF THE GUARANTEE WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE. HE ACCEPTED THAT IT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE FOR HIM TO GO TO HIS MEETING WITH MRS THATCHER WITH A SIMPLE PROPOSAL FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE GUARANTEE.

6. WE REMINDED HIM OF WHAT THE GUARANTEE WAS, VIZ ACCEPTANCE OF THE FACT THAT NORTHERN IRELAND MUST REMAIN PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM SO LONG AS THE MAJORITY OF THE INHABITANTS WISHED IT TO BE SO. MR HAUGHEY REPLIED THAT HE WAS CERTAINLY NOT LOOKING FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT BASED ON AGREEMENT AND CONSENT. HE RECOGNISED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO FORCE ANYONE INTO A SETTLEMENT THAT WAS NOT TRULLY ACCEPTED.

7. I ASKED MR HAUGHEY HOW HE SAW THE MEETING AS A WHOLE. I ASSUMED

THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FORMAL AGENDA BUT HAD HE ENVISAGED, FOR EXAMPLE, OPENING THE CONVERSATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION? MR HAUGHEY REPLIED THAT HE CERTAINLY THOUGHT THAT HE AND MRS THATCHER SHOULD DISCUSS THE PRESENT STATE OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION QUOTE AS CONCERNED POLITICIANS UNQUOTE. HE RECALLED THAT DE VALERA AND CHAMBERLAIN HAD MET, IN 1939, IN WHAT COULD TURN OUT (THOUGH HE HOPED NOT) TO BE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

8. I ASKED WHETHER MR HAUGHEY HAD ANYTHING TO ADD ON THE QUESTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE REPUBLIC, MR HAUGHEY DID NOT MENTION ANY SPECIFIC IDEAS BUT SAID THAT WE SHOULD CERTAINLY LOOK AT THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD TENSION.

9. I ASKED MR HAUGHEY WHAT HE HOPED TO BRING BACK FROM DOWNING STREET. HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT BE PRECISE ABOUT THIS BUT EMPHASISED THAT HE REGARDED THE MEETING AS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE AND AS PART OF QUOTE AN ON-GOING PROCESS UNQUOTE; NOT AS A ONCE FOR ALL QUOTE MAKE-OR-BREAK UNQUOTE OCCASION.

10. ON THE NIGHT OF 16 MAY, NALLY REMINDED ME THAT HAUGHEY HAD SAID THAT NORTHERN IRELAND WAS HIS QUOTE FIRST POLITICAL PRIORITY UNQUOTE. HE MEANT THAT HAUGHEY DROPPED EVERYTHING IF SOMETHING OF IMPORTANCE CROPPED UP ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND. DURING THIS WEEK HE CONCENTRATED ENTIRELY ON PREPARING FOR HIS MEETING WITH MRS THATCHER. HE HAD HAD MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS, CIVIL SERVANTS AND DEFENCE CHIEFS.

11. NALLY ASKED ME HOW I THOUGHT MY MEETING WITH HAUGHEY HAD GONE. I REPLIED THAT IT HAD BEEN VERY USEFUL. I AGAIN STRESSED OUR ATTITUDE TO THE SO-CALLED GUARANTEE. THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF WITHDRAWING OR MODIFYING IT. NALLY COMMENTED THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL I HAD SPOKEN AS I DID AT THE MEETING, AND HE HAD SPOKEN ON THE SAME LINES TO THE TAOISEACH AFTER OUR MEETING.

12. I ASKED NALLY WHAT HAUGHEY EXPECTED FROM THE MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. NALLY PONDERED THIS, SAYING IT WAS QUOTE A VERY PERTINENT QUESTION UNQUOTE. HE ADMITTED THAT HE DID NOT REALLY KNOW THE ANSWER, NOR, HE SUSPECTED, DID HAUGHEY. I WONDERED IF HAUGHEY WANTED TO SAY, AFTER THE MEETING, THAT IT HAD BEEN THE FIRST IN QUOTE AN ONGOING PROCESS UNQUOTE AS HE HAD IMPLIED DURING HIS MEETING WITH ME. NALLY REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT WAS SO, ADDING THAT HAUGHEY MIGHT ALSO LIKE TO SAY THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD QUOTE REVIEW THE SITUATION REGULARLY UNQUOTE. I SAID THAT THAT WOULD NOT GO DOWN WELL IN LONDON AND HE COMMENTED THAT QUOTE PART OF A CONTINUING PROCESS UNQUOTE WOULD BE A BETTER PHRASE THAN QUOTE REVIEWING THE SITUATION REGULARLY UNQUOTE.

13. NALLY STRESSED, IN THE COURSE OF OUR TALK, THAT HAUGHEY WANTED THE MEETING TO GO WELL AND TO BE SEEN TO HAVE GONE WELL. HE WAS ALSO SURE THAT THE TAOISEACH WOULD TRY TO SET THE NORTHERN IRELAND QUESTION IN A WIDER CONTEXT THAN HAD BEEN THE CASE BEFORE AND WOULD ADOPT THE QUOTE THESE ISLANDS UNQUOTE APPROACH.

14. COMMENT: I THINK THESE DISCUSSIONS CONFIRM WHAT I BELIEVE HAUGHEY'S OBJECTIVES TO BE AND WHICH WERE OUTLINED IN PARA 6 OF MY TEL NO 145. IT IS INTERESTING THAT HE DREW BACK VERY FAST INDEED ON THE MATTER OF THE ^{SO-CALLED} GUARANTEE. IT COULD BE SIGNIFICANT THAT NEITHER HE NOR NALLY MENTIONED IRISH UNITY. I THINK HE IS APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE MEETING AND HOW HE WILL BE RECEIVED BY AND GET ON WITH MRS THATCHER. HE IS CLEARLY MOST ANXIOUS FOR THE MEETING TO GO WELL AND WILL SEEK TO BE STATESMANLIKE AND CORRECT IN HIS APPROACH. IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT HE FEELS THE NEED TO BRING BACK SOMETHING WHICH CAN BE REPRESENTED TO HIS PARTY AS PROGRESS ON NORTHERN IRELAND AND/OR IN THE FIELD OF ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS.

HAYDON