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10 DOWNING STREET  
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From the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff

17 December 1998

*Dear Nick,*

**NORTHERN IRELAND**

The Prime Minister spoke to David Trimble this evening to give him the final nudge on reaching agreement. He emphasised the need to wrap up all the remaining questions in the meeting with the Irish. Trimble should not try to open up new bits of the text or press for details like division of responsibilities between the centre and the Department of Finance.

Trimble said he agreed. He thought they could settle it in the forthcoming meeting. The Irish Government could then sell the resulting deal to Seamus Mallon at home. He did, however, have a couple of difficulties that needed to be sorted out, eg the language in the tourism text. Trimble said that he understood Mallon had a draft statement breaking off negotiations in his pocket. The Prime Minister said that this illustrated further why it was necessary to tie up the deal now.

An hour or so later, the Prime Minister spoke to Gerry Adams. Adams pressed his argument for an Equality Department. The British Government needed to take a view. The Prime Minister asked if Adams had thought what this Department would look like if Roy Beggs Junior was in charge of it. Adams said that equality would be lost if it was left to the centre of the Government. He said the Unionists had been trying to undermine the implementation bodies. They were trying to limit their number and their importance and rule out the establishment of future bodies. Sinn Fein were not happy campers and had major reservations about the Agreement that was being concluded. The Prime Minister said that more implementation bodies could be agreed in time. If you looked at all the cooperation bodies, a lot was being done on the North-South basis.

Adams said he believed that David Trimble would sign up for agreement very shortly. The trouble was the pattern of Unionist behaviour. He had to sell

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this agreement to his people. The Prime Minister sympathised. But it was important to get an agreement in place as soon as possible.

I am copying this letter to John Grant (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Sebastian Wood (Cabinet Office), and by fax to Sir Christopher Meyer (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

*Yours ever,*

*E. M. G. Powell*

9. JONATHAN POWELL

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