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Title: Letter to Liam Cosgrave, TD, Taoiseach from Dr Garret FitzGerald, TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs with draft of letter from the Taoiseach to Harold Wilson, MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on subject of power-sharing in Northern Ireland

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55 Larchfield Rd.

Sunday

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Quinty,
for file of
TYPA activities
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Dear Taoiseach,

There are two matters on which I am inclined to the view, after consultation within the Department, that we should consider getting in touch with the British Government - viz, the White Paper on power-sharing, due out very soon, and the question of British contacts with the Provisionals.

So far as the latter is concerned we are inclined to the view that it would be best to wait until we hear what Frank Cooper has to say next Thursday/Friday. It does not seem likely that much in the way of direct negotiations between the British Government and the Provisionals will happen in the meantime.

On power-sharing, however, we are inclined to the view that you should write to Wilson at this stage, as there have been reports of the White Paper being brought forward, perhaps to this week. We continue to get disturbing reactions from British officials on this matter. Sean Gaynor talked to Douglas Janes of the NIO in London on the 2nd. He reports that Janes spoke of 'participation' rather than 'power-sharing', and mentioned, among forms of 'participation' that would be referred to in the White Paper; 'the system of entrenched minority', which ~~of course~~ ^{seems to} assume that the minority will have no ~~part~~ part in the Executive.

I enclose a draft for your consideration. I shall be at the Washington Embassy from 1 AM Tuesday onwards, should you wish to contact me.

Yours

Janet

P.S. Seán Donlon will be in Belfast tomorrow and should he get information suggesting that direct negotiations between the British and the Provisionals might be initiated earlier than we at present expect he will get in touch with you to suggest possible urgent action on that aspect also.

DRAFT

Dear Prime Minister

I know that you will shortly be publishing a document on power-sharing, as a preliminary to the Convention elections. For some time past we have been concerned at various suggestions that have seemed to imply that this document might contain as examples of power-sharing to be considered by the Convention forms of power-sharing that would not require by law membership by minority representatives of whatever form of Executive Northern Ireland might have under new Constitutional arrangements. There has also been a tendency to substitute the vague term "participation" for "power-sharing" in official discussions on this subject, and in one recent instance an official of the Northern Ireland Office actually suggested that among the forms of "participation" that would be mentioned in this proposed document would be "the system of entrenched minority", which seems incompatible with minority participation in the Executive.

Garret FitzGerald recently spoke to Jim Callaghan on this subject, when they met to discuss arrangements for the British re-negotiation, and, of course, he also pressed the point with Merlyn Rees when they met. I feel, however, that there may still be a danger of misunderstanding on this point and accordingly I should be grateful to have your personal assurance that our agreed position stated in a joint communiqué last September, and confirmed in November still stands - viz. that no form of administration for Northern Ireland that does not include power-sharing in government will be acceptable to your Government - and that the forthcoming document will, despite any suggestions to the contrary at official level, make these explicitly clear.

You will of course appreciate that any modification of our joint position on this matter, or on the Irish dimension, [would place my

Government in an impossible situation, as ^{it} would undermine the basis of the common and agreed stance that Irish and British Governments have been able to adopt on Northern Ireland since the abolition of Stormont three years ago. ^{and} ^{It} would clearly be very damaging to the future prospects for peace in Northern Ireland ^{if} at this critical juncture a change in your Government's position should create an open divergence between us. []] However, I am sure that whatever may have been suggested at official level, this is not your intention, and that you will be able to give my Government the necessary assurance that there has been and will be no change in your Government's policy in these matters, and that the document on power-sharing will reflect this fully.