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Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

18th March, 1983.

Mr. James Molyneaux, M.P.,
Leader,
Ulster Unionist Party.

Dear Mr. Molyneaux,

I enclose a copy of a Statement issued in Dublin on 11 March from which you will see that my Government propose to arrange for the establishment of a consultative Forum.

Participation in the Forum will be open to all democratic parties which reject violence, and which have members elected or appointed to the Dail and Senate in Dublin or the Northern Ireland Assembly.

I have noted the statements by you and by other elected representatives of your Party suggesting reluctance or refusal to take part in the proposed consultations. While I appreciate the background to any such reaction, I believe that it may be based on a misunderstanding and I would hope that your Party might reconsider any position you may have taken along these lines.

The precise purpose of the proposed Forum is to consider "the manner in which lasting peace and stability can be achieved in a new Ireland through the democratic process". These terms which were carefully chosen to encourage participation by all democratic Parties in the island who reject violence, do not prejudge or predetermine any particular structures or processes by which the objective of peace and stability might be achieved. Accordingly, participation in the Forum would not commit a Party to any specific political or constitutional scenario. In fact, I believe that the consultations could help to promote understanding and reconciliation and lead to developments that would greatly help in bringing to an end the violence which is repudiated and abhorred by the vast majority of Irish people, North and South.

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Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

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I propose to arrange a meeting, in the week commencing 11 April, of the leaders of all the Parties, who wish to participate, to discuss the arrangements involved. I should like to express the hope that the Ulster Unionist Party would review any position it may have taken in regard to participation in the Forum and that, for the sake of peace and progress in this island, and improved British-Irish relations, you would indicate to me that you would wish to be present at this first meeting.

I am extending parallel invitations to Mr. Dick Spring, T.D., Mr. Charles Haughey, T.D., Mr. Tomas MacGiolla, T.D., Rev. Ian Paisley, M.P., M.E.P., Mr. Oliver Napier and Mr. John Hume, M.E.P. The precise time and venue for the meeting can be settled when the responses of the Party leaders are known.

Yours sincerely,

GARRET FITZGERALD

Taoiseach.