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- See last paragraph

Oifig an Taoisigh  
Office of the Taoiseach

Σ1 March, 1994.

The Rt. Hon. Mr. John Major, M.P.  
Prime Minister of Britain.

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 24 March. Obviously, it is important that we keep in close contact, as developments unfold. While a minimalist ceasefire is of course totally unsatisfactory, viewed from another perspective, it could be seen perhaps that the pressures on all sides for a cessation of violence are beginning to tell. A permanent cessation remains the goal and the precondition of access to the negotiating table // whether in the context of the Forum on our side, or preliminary talks on yours. We should try and encourage them, in whatever ways are open to us both, to take that final step.

My discussions with President Clinton were very satisfactory and encouraging. He has given his own and his Administration's full support to the joint efforts of our two Governments to advance the process and bring about an end to violence. The very clear message not just from the Administration but from the opinion leaders of Irish-America, political, corporate and cultural, is that they want and expect to see an end to violence, as the necessary prelude to further political progress.

I gather the work of the group under Tim Dalton and John Chilcot will be discussed at the next Anglo-Irish Conference on 25 April. I think that we might first wait to see what emerges. While we will continue to rigorously pursue terrorism as we have been doing, with the closest cooperation between the security forces on both sides of the border, we are both well aware of the need to avoid those measures which could tend to increase support for

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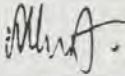
terrorism, because of the negative reaction they might evoke. There is a fine line here, where our judgement may sometimes differ from yours.

The work of the Liaison Group is proceeding reasonably satisfactorily. I agree with you that it is important to maintain political momentum on this front, also.

Events may be beginning to move. We might review after the next Anglo-Irish Conference the opportunity for a meeting in advance of our next scheduled meeting in June. I am likely to be over for other reasons some time in May. But I am sure we will stay in close touch in the meantime.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Taoiseach.



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 March 1994

*Dear Albert,*

I am glad that we had the chance of a word on the telephone before your visit to the United States. Our statement helped to steady the situation then. I hope that you enjoyed your trip. It was well timed. I am sure it was salutary for you to spell out so clearly the importance of a permanent cessation of violence. //

We are clearly now in choppy waters, which will be no great surprise to either of us. I am not quite sure where the Provisionals intend to go from here, but on present evidence it looks as if it will be some time before they come to their senses. Their recent spate of attacks both in Northern Ireland and here has been ominous, and we shall have to show them very firmly that continued terrorism will bring no advantage.

We also, of course, need to do all that we can to make life as difficult as possible for the men of violence from both sides. The most encouraging aspect of the security picture has been the growing cooperation and better understanding between the police and the security authorities on either side of the border. Your extradition legislation is another welcome example of our common determination to defeat terrorism. The Working Group which you and I set up under Tim Dalton and John Chilcot has been making steady progress, and I know that they are planning further meetings for next month. I think it

would be helpful to them if you and I had a look together at the fruits of their labours and did a little brain-storming about where to go from here. This could give the Working Group added impetus. Perhaps the best way of organising this would be to ask the Group to produce a report which you and I could then discuss.

It would be equally useful to take stock soon of the broad political situation. I know that Dick Spring and Patrick Mayhew are trying to put together a shared understanding of what might prove acceptable to all the participants as an outcome of the Talks process. At the same time, we are continuing our bilateral talks with the constitutional parties (and you will have seen press accounts of my lively discussion with Paisley and the DUP on 21 March). I cannot pretend that the shadow of the European Parliamentary elections is making our task easier; but I think it is vital to sustain the political momentum, and to demonstrate that we are not going to wait for those outside the process to come in.

I think this means that we shall not be short of things to discuss if we can find time to get together informally, in the period after Easter, on the lines which we discussed. Perhaps you could let me know if this matches your thinking. We might then put our offices to work on a time and a place.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours Ever,  
Alan H.

Mr. Albert Reynolds. T.D.