



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/100/11

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Accession Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

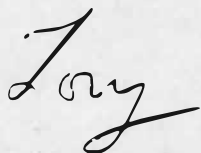
25A

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

26 May, 1998.

Rt. Hon. Tony Blair M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London.

Dear



Thank you for your letter of 19 May, 1998, concerning your proposals in relation to the agenda for the forthcoming European Council in Cardiff.

I have no difficulties with your proposals that we focus at Cardiff on the range of issues raised in your letter. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you next week in Dublin when we can discuss informally over dinner how each of the issues might be advanced. Of particular interest will be the Economic Guidelines being prepared by ECOFIN, the Agenda 2000 proposals and the joint ECOFIN and Social Affairs Council report on National Employment Action Plans. I also look forward at that time to hearing your views on the topic you have proposed for discussion over the working lunch on 15 June. Our discussion of this matter on Monday next is timely from an Irish point of view, given the recent ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty. I recall also that you have a strong interest in this area.

On Northern Ireland issues and the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, I believe we need to focus in on the following:

- Republicans signalling that conflict is over;
- security de-escalation;
- the setting up of the shadow Executive;
- the marching season and in particular Drumcree;
- how we deal with the decommissioning section of the Agreement;
- prisoner releases;

Oifig an Taoisigh, Tithe an Rialtais, Baile Átha Cliath 2.
Office of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings, Dublin 2.

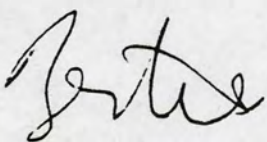
Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

- the timing and content of legislation in Westminster and the Oireachtas;
- membership of the Policing Commission and Criminal Justice Review;
- the equality and rights agenda and the need for early action;
- the steps that we can now take between us to prepare the way for implementation of other aspects of the Agreement in particular the North/South Council and North/South Implementation Bodies.

I believe it important that we have a clear understanding of our respective positions. As ever there are distinct sensitivities on different sides and if we are to manage them constructively and together then that clear understanding between us is as critical as it always has been.

I hope this is useful. I look forward to discussing all of the issues raised with you.

Yours sincerely



Taoiseach.

Oifig an Taoisigh, Tithe an Rialtais, Baile Átha Cliath 2.
Office of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings, Dublin 2.