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Mr. Paul Mahony

S.H.

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

*Mr Hare
for file
11.5.98*

Uimhir.....

*W. Kirwan
11.5.98*

TAOISEACH

To: Private Secretary to the Taoiseach

From: W Kirwan, Assistant Secretary

Re: Thank-you letters re Contributions to Good Friday Agreements

1. As requested, I submit herewith draft letters^{*} of thanks from the Taoiseach to a substantial number of officials and advisers who played a part in bringing about the Good Friday Agreements. As the upper echelon, I have personalised the letters as far as possible, after a common opening core. In doing so, I have sought to highlight the most noteworthy contributions each of the individuals concerned made in the process. I hope my identification of these highlights sufficiently corresponds with that of the Taoiseach! Of course, it is open to him to amend any draft letter. I asked Mr Hare to draft the letter to myself, which he has done.
2. Apart from the personalised letters, there is then a standard, but I hope adequately expressive, letter to go to a significant number of officials. In regard to how far to go in the Department of Foreign Affairs, I took advice from Mr Ray Bassett, Counsellor in Anglo-Irish Division, whose judgement I would trust.
3. There is a further standard letter ready to go to all appropriate persons concerned with logistics aspects, with a personalised paragraph to be added in each case. Dr Jordan, who is out of the office on business today, is pursuing getting the names and designations concerned and drafting the individual paragraphs.
4. I have in hand draft letters to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of State Liz O'Donnell and the Attorney General and will proceed with these unless directed to the contrary.
5. I believe that when the letters referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 are submitted, I shall have covered all who should be included but I shall mention one or two particular cases orally.

W Kirwan

7 May, 1998

** All letters were signed by the Taoiseach.*

11/5/98.

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

11 May, 1998

Mr. Paddy Teahon
Secretary-General
Department of the Taoiseach

Dear Paddy,

The Agreement concluded on Good Friday in Belfast by the two Governments and the full spectrum of parties involved in the multi-party negotiations is truly historic. After more than a generation of conflict, we now have an agreed and widely supported framework - something for which successive Irish Governments and a generation of dedicated officials have worked for so long.


An historic achievement of this nature would not have been possible without a range of key ingredients. You know, better than most, what these were. In regard to a number of them, we were blessed with good luck over the past year.

But during that year and over a much longer period, it was vitally important that successive Taoisigh and Governments were able to rely on the remarkable breadth of knowledge, creative talents and dedicated professionalism of a fine corps of officials dealing with Northern Ireland.

I fully recognise, and want to put on record, the often unsung but enormous and vital contribution of the civil servants, who have worked for years behind the scenes, painstakingly ensuring that all of the necessary ingredients were in place. Without such back-up this agreement would not have been possible. I was very pleased - as I am sure you were - to note that in the many tributes paid recently in both Houses of the Oireachtas, a lot of the speakers singled out the civil servants for particular recognition.

You yourself have made an enormous contribution over the whole period involved, including in the period leading up to the first IRA ceasefire; then in getting over the Washington 3 hurdle and getting the multi-party negotiations started; then in persuading the Republican movement to restore the ceasefire; then in ensuring Sinn

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Office of the Taoiseach, Government Buildings, Dublin 2.



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

Féin entry into the negotiations, while keeping the UUP at the table; at various crucial stages in the move into substantive negotiations and then in the substantive talks themselves; and, above all, in the critical concluding period of the negotiations, especially the last 4 days of them. At every stage, your role as the official chiefly responsible for our dealings with No. 10 Downing Street was vital, while equally important was your ability to make an effective impact in our dealings with the Republican constituency.

From the time that I took office, not too long after the change of Government in London, I placed huge value on your experience and advice, as a deal-maker second to none. The outcome amply vindicates your sagacity in calling correctly the many fine judgements that fell to be made by me, Minister Andrews and the small group of top advisers. You were never afraid to advise that risks be taken but always able to judge what were the right risks and what was the best timing.

For me, coming into the situation after the talks had been under way for a year but were effectively stalled and where we had no IRA ceasefire, it was of tremendous assistance to have somebody of your skills in place as Secretary-General of my Department and as chief official adviser in this area. I believe that when the history of these times comes to be written, your enormous contribution to the achievement of the Good Friday Agreements will be widely, and deservedly, recognised.

May I conclude by expressing my deep personal appreciation of all you did to bring us to where we are today.

With warm wishes.

Yours sincerely,

and thanks Paddy
Bertie

Bertie Ahern
Taoiseach.

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

11 May, 1998

Dr Martin Mansergh
Special Adviser to the Taoiseach
Department of the Taoiseach

Dear Martin,

The Agreement concluded on Good Friday in Belfast by the two Governments and the full spectrum of parties involved in the multi-party negotiations is truly historic. After more than a generation of conflict, we now have an agreed and widely supported framework - something for which successive Irish Governments and a generation of dedicated officials have worked for so long.


An historic achievement of this nature would not have been possible without a range of key ingredients. You know, better than most, what these were. In regard to a number of them, we were blessed with good luck over the past year.

But during that year and over a much longer period, it was vitally important that successive Taoisigh and Governments were able to rely on the remarkable breadth of knowledge, creative talents and dedicated professionalism of a fine corps of officials and advisers dealing with Northern Ireland.

I fully recognise, and want to put on record, the enormous and vital contribution of the advisers and the civil servants, who have worked for years behind the scenes, painstakingly ensuring that all of the necessary ingredients were in place. Without such back-up this agreement would not have been possible.

Your personal contribution is, I believe unsurpassed. In Government and Opposition, you were, throughout the whole period since the Hume-Adams process began and, indeed, further back to when deeper foundations were laid, from 1980 onwards, the principal adviser to successive leaders of Fianna Fáil, on all matters involving Northern Ireland and the resolution of the conflict in and about it. You were deeply involved in all the successive negotiations whenever Fianna Fáil were in Government, and in Opposition, your advice and strategic sense were even more acutely needed and strongly valued.

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Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

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With the remarkable continuity of your always creative involvement, you deserve, I believe, to be seen as one of the principal architects of the Agreements now reached. You made an enormous contribution to so many of the building-blocks - the development of the Dublin-London Government to Government, "new plane" approach in 1980-81; the working of the Anglo-Irish Agreement from 1987; the encouragement of the Hume-Adams dialogue; the development, from that, of the process, involving the two governments and those on the extremes, that led to the Downing Street Declaration and, subsequently, the key breakthroughs of the IRA and Loyalist ceasefires; then the negotiation of the highly important Joint Framework Document, up to a late stage; and, more recently, the contacts that led to the restoration of the IRA ceasefire and Sinn Féin's entry into the talks.

All of these developments were essential steps along the road to the Agreements now reached. The scheme and structure of those Agreements is recognisably that of the Joint Framework Document and whole swathes of the language in the Agreements reflect the formulations in whose creation you were so centrally involved, as set out, particularly, in the Downing Street Declaration and the Framework Document.

When we returned to Government last year, it was a great source of confidence to me to have you by my side, with all that experience, with your mastery of the historical sweep and dimensions of the whole area and your acute sense of strategy and of what was politically possible. That latter sense and your outstanding drafting skills were vital in working out the package of constitutional amendments that was able to command such enthusiastic and widespread support in Fianna Fáil and, I believe, in the country at large. Equally important was your ability to act as a bridge between the democratic, constitutional republicanism of our party and that strand of the republican tradition represented by Sinn Féin. Your credibility among those in that group who were seeking to embrace the path of democratic policies was a very valuable asset in this whole process.

That process bears your finger prints at every stage. And in the period since the substantive negotiations really got under way, your participation in Belfast, London and Dublin was a vital factor of confidence to our Ministers and, in the critical concluding stages of the negotiations, to me personally. In those final few days, I

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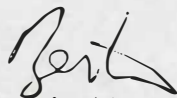
greatly profited from your participation in the small group of top advisers who helped me to steer our ship to the successful conclusion.

Since independence, few public servants have played a role in the advancement of the welfare of our country and nation that can compare with your extraordinary contribution. You can be deservedly proud of all you have done. On my own behalf, and on behalf of the Government. I want to express our deep appreciation.

Thanks for all the effort - Martin

With warm wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Bertie Ahern
Taoiseach.