



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 October 1985

Dear Mr. Paisley

Thank you for your further joint letter of 30 September about the Anglo-Irish talks.

I can only repeat my assurance that, whatever emerges from our negotiations with the Irish Government, there is no threat whatsoever to the Union, nor any question of compromising the sovereign responsibility of the Government and Parliament of the United Kingdom for the affairs of Northern Ireland.

I am certainly willing to see you again and to listen to any proposals you may have for a new devolved administration that would be acceptable to the Northern Ireland community as a whole. Unfortunately, my attendance at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and subsequently at the 40th Anniversary celebrations of the United Nations mean that this can only be towards the end of the month. My office will be in touch to propose a date.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

The Reverend Ian Paisley, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt. Hon. The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1.

30th September, 1985.

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 13th September 1985. We cannot agree that the present protracted and secret negotiations with the Government of the Irish Republic will have the beneficial effects on security or peace and stability in Northern Ireland that we all seek. If the Irish Republic is in a position to improve security co-operation, we would contend that this should have already been carried into effect without the carrot of a right to intrude into the internal affairs of the United Kingdom.

As far as peace and stability are concerned, the secrecy of your Government's negotiations has only served to heighten suspicion and fears in the majority community in Northern Ireland. In your letter you do not explain why confidentiality is a necessary concomitant of "useful results". The Unionist community is understandably perplexed as to why its duly elected leaders must be kept completely in the dark as to what is being planned. We observe that your Government has not protested about the widely-reported briefings by the Government of the Irish Republic of Mr John Hume's S.D.L.P., and of a Cardinal from the Vatican. It seems that the Pope is to know more about your deliberations than Unionist members of the British Parliament.

In our letter to you of 13th August 1985, we specifically sought an assurance that you interpret undivided United Kingdom sovereignty over Northern Ireland as precluding any British/Irish security arrangements only with Northern Ireland under

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than with United Kingdom/Republic of Ireland relations as a whole. We take it that your omission to confirm this in your letter is deliberate. We conclude from this that the information that has reached us that machinery of this type if planned by your Government is substantially accurate. We have also been informed that this machinery is to include a secretariat including Irish civil servants which will be based permanently or from time to time in Belfast. We consider it our duty to advise you that we and the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland see these proposals as clear infringements of British sovereignty. If we have been misinformed as to what is planned we call upon you to put the record straight in clear and unambiguous terms.

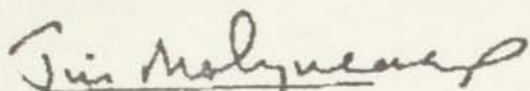
We cannot accept that the Republic of Ireland has in any way diluted its claim to the territory of Northern Ireland. An indication by a government of the Republic that it accepts the existence of Northern Ireland as a fact is a far cry from de jure recognition. We regret to note from your letter the implication that you have failed to make de jure recognition of the right of the people of Northern Ireland to self-determination a condition precedent to consideration of Irish demands.

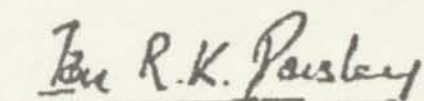
We do not challenge the right of the government and parliament of the United Kingdom to determine the policy to be adopted by our country in respect of relations with other countries. We would contend, however, that if it is your intention to treat Northern Ireland as a distinct part of the Kingdom in terms of relations with the Irish Republic, then justice dictates that the people of Northern Ireland, either through their elected representatives or in some other appropriate manner, should be afforded the opportunity to accept or reject what your government has negotiated for the Province before the deal is finally struck. After all, in the last paragraph of your letter, you insist that devolved government can only be restored to Northern Ireland if it is "acceptable to both sides of the Community there". We invite you to state whether it is your government's policy to proceed with a British/Irish deal on Northern Ireland unacceptable to the majority in the Province, while the minority is to be permitted to continue

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to exercise a veto on devolution. Given the brief opportunity we had to elaborate our case when we met you and presented our letter of 28th August 1965, and the growing anxiety in Northern Ireland, we request a further meeting with you at the earliest possible date.

Yours sincerely,


JAMES MOLYNEUX


IAN PAISLEY