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AMBASAIÐ NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



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Handwritten circled numbers: 10, 25

27 May 1997

Mr. Sean O hUiginn
Second Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs

Handwritten notes: 48, 27, 15
PST: PSS, Messrs. Teahon,
Donlon & Dalton;
Ambassadors London &
Washington; Joint Secretary;
Counsellors A-I

Stamp: SEEN BY TAOISEACH

RECEIVED IN THE TAOISEACH'S
PRIVATE OFFICE

date... 29/5/97

Handwritten notes: 11/6/97, 12/6/97, and other initials

Handwritten signature: Taoiseach
with date 28/5/97

Dear Sean,

Blair's Speech

As reported on the telephone I have been told by two sources here in a position to know that Blair's recent speech on Northern Ireland was written in the main part by John Holmes. I understand that the speech was based on ideas provided by Quentin Thomas some time ago and that substantial portions of the text may already have been drafted before Tony Blair became Prime Minister. The point was put to me that the speech could have been delivered by John Major, if he had been returned, and that it represented a certain continuity in policy and approach.

If what I have been told is accurate it would not surprise me. The structure of thinking behind the speech is close to Holmes's own thinking on issues such as the Union and entry conditions for Sinn Fein (see for example the report of my conversation with him on 23 April), and I suspect that the way the speech was handled was influenced by him also. Holmes is, I feel, an advocate of a more robust approach to consultation with us, and he has on more than one occasion said to me that the British Government has treated us more gingerly than it would any other country at times when there has been friction in the relationship. He would not in my view be a natural fan of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and in this I suspect that his views are not too dissimilar to those of his new boss. Blair told me before the election that he doubted if the Anglo-Irish Agreement would pass through Parliament today in the form it was agreed

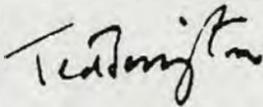
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in 1985. The comment was directed mainly at opinions in the Conservative Party but it left me with a question mark over his own commitment.

Invitation to UUP Reception

You may wish to know that I have received an invitation from David Trimble to a Reception at the Unionist Information Office here in London on 1 June. This is, as far as we are aware, the first time that the Ambassador has been invited to a UUP event of this kind. (Philip McDonagh attended the UUP's Christmas Party. Patricia Campbell, the UUP Information Officer, came to a Reception which I hosted at the Embassy last week to mark the publication of Christine Kinealy's new book on the Famine). I intend to take up the invitation although it overlaps with another event being hosted by the Foreign Secretary that I am obliged to attend.

Yours sincerely,



Ted Barrington
Ambassador