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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

18 April 1986

Dear Archbishop,

Thank you for your letter of 8 April and for your kind remarks about our recent conversations.

I entirely agree with you that, in the present difficult situation in Northern Ireland, dialogue rather than confrontation must be our aim. That is why Tom King and I are continuing to urge the Unionist leaders to resume discussions with the Government and I have recently written again to them.

I am most grateful for your offer of assistance, coming as it does from someone who is uniquely placed with contacts both North and South of the border. Tom King has told me of the positive way in which you have responded in your discussions with him. I shall certainly have very much in mind your kind and welcome offer of assistance.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

The Most Reverend The Archbishop of Armagh

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PERSONAL CONFIDENTIAL
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

16 April 1986

Dear Charles

You wrote to me on 12 April forwarding a copy of a Private and Confidential letter to the Prime Minister from the Archbishop of Armagh. I enclose a draft reply.

Although his public utterances about the Anglo-Irish Agreement have not always been helpful, the Archbishop now seems genuine in his desire to assist us. But in the present delicate state of negotiations with the Unionist leaders we do not think there is anything more which we could usefully ask him to do at the present time. The draft reply therefore simply thanks him for his offer and says that we will take it up if and when we think it would be helpful to do so.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours sincerely
Jim Daniels*

J A DANIELL

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PERSONAL CONFIDENTIAL

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE

<p>To</p> <p>The Most Reverend The Archbishop of Armagh The See House 32 Knockdene Park South BELFAST BT5 7AB</p> <p>(Full Postal Address)</p>	<p>Enclosures</p>	<p>Copies to be sent to</p> <p><i>To Home</i></p> <p><i>DAIAPP</i></p> <p><i>Dear Archbishop</i></p> <p>(Full Address, if Necessary)</p>
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LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY THE PRIME MINISTER
(Name of Signatory)

Thank you for your letter of 8 April and for your kind remarks about our recent conversations.

I entirely agree with you that, in the present difficult situation in Northern Ireland, dialogue rather than confrontation must be our aim. That is why Tom King and I are continuing to urge the Unionist leaders to resume discussions with the Government. *and have really written again to them.*

I am most grateful for your offer of assistance, coming as it does from someone who is uniquely placed with contacts both North and South of the border. Tom King has told me of the positive way in which you have responded in your discussions with him, and we *will* certainly have very much in mind your *kind* welcome offer of assistance, ~~if the right moment arises.~~

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CCPC



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 April 1986

I enclose for your Secretary of State's information a copy of a strictly private and confidential letter to the Prime Minister from the Archbishop of Armagh. Knowledge of it should be restricted as closely as possible. -8.4.86

BF 11

I should be grateful for advice and an early draft reply.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Sir Robert Armstrong.

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D/f

C D POWELL

J A Daniell Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

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The Most Reverend
THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH,

The See House
Cathedral Close
ARMAGH BT61 7EE
Telephone: Armagh 522851

8 April 1986

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

The Right Honourable the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON

Prime Minister
Agree that I may show
this on a strictly
personal basis to
Yes Mr. King & RTA? You will
no doubt want to discuss
it with them. CDP 11/4

My dear Prime Minister,

You will recall that on two occasions I had the pleasure and privilege of talking with you in Downing Street regarding the situation in Northern Ireland. I would like you to know how valuable I found these conversations to be.

Since those meetings took place I have been in confidential contact with several of the main political leaders involved in the Irish situation, both north and south. These contacts are continuing and I believe are based now on mutual trust. I understand from Dublin that your office was informed of my involvement in this regard yesterday.

I write to you at this juncture in strictest confidence to assure you of my willingness to consider any request or suggestion which you may feel you would like to make should you see a role I could play in the light of the growing seriousness of the situation in Northern Ireland. I am extremely concerned at recent trends in our situation and I believe that dialogue is the only way forward. I am equally aware of the opportunities open to you to engage in contacts with the leaders of the political parties in the Province at this time. However it may be that you would see some aspect of the problem with which someone in my position could be of assistance.



The Most Reverend
THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH,

The See House
Cathedral Close
ARMAGH BT61 7EE
Telephone: Armagh 522851

continued/

Should this occasion arise may I again assure you of my willingness to consider any request and to use the position I now hold on an all-Ireland basis to extend further the contacts I have fostered.

I realise that you are as aware as I am of the seriousness of the situation in Northern Ireland over the past few weeks. I fear that unless political progress can be made soon in terms of dialogue then we shall find ourselves facing an almost total erosion of constitutional politics. Given our conditions the road back from the politics of the street to that of the constitutional representative will be long and dangerous.

Within the spirit of our previous conversations at Downing Street I write to assure you of my continuing concern and prayers in the difficult task which faces you in Ireland. Please be assured of my sincerity in making the above offer at this time.

Perhaps you would be kind enough to address any correspondence on this subject to me at the following address:

The See House, 32 Knockdene Park South, Belfast BT5 7AB (653973).

Should you at any time wish to talk to me in confidence I am prepared to fly over to London for that purpose.



The Most Reverend
THE ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH, _____

The See House
Cathedral Close
ARMAGH BT61 7EE
Telephone: Armagh 522851

continued/

Thank you again for the opportunity of meeting for discussions at
Downing Street.

With kindest personal regards,

Yours very sincerely,

+ Arch. Armagh.