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Reference Code:	2010/53/872
Creation Date(s):	21 April 1980
Extent and medium:	1 page
Creator(s):	Department of the Taoiseach
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The Hon Brian J Lenihan TD
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House
DUBLIN



21 April 1980

Dear Brian,

I found our discussion on Tuesday very useful, and I am glad to have had the opportunity to get to know you. I am most grateful for all the care that was taken over the arrangements which helped the talks to be such a success. I think we both agreed that regular meetings of this sort are in our common interest, and I look forward to welcoming you in a few months when it is my turn to act as host.

Perhaps I can take this opportunity informally to emphasise a point which I regard as being of the first importance. I respect, though I made clear that I do not agree with, your view that a necessary element in the progress we are trying to make in Northern Ireland would be to involve your own Government in some way in the process. On the basis of my experience in negotiating with the parties involved since I took office, and in particular on the basis of what I learnt at the Conference, I have no doubt whatever that any overt involvement of your Government, or any commitment to such involvement, would extinguish immediately all co-operation from the Unionist side. I urge you to take this into consideration in any future steps which your Government may take, and in particular in any public statements of your own policy.

I look forward to meeting you again before too long.

c.c. Mr. Neligan
For draft reply please

Yours etc

Eugene Banks
Private Secretary
29 April 1980