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**FROM: JACQUELINE BLACK  
CENTRAL SECRETARIAT  
7 OCTOBER 1997**

*rec'd. 8.10.97  
ARR.*

**DEPARTMENTAL CO-ORDINATORS : URGENT - BY FAX**

**EAST/WEST CO-OPERATION**

1. Mrs Brown's minute of 15 May 1997 asked, inter alia, if Departments had views on issues with potential for East/West working.
2. I now attach a minute from David Brooker dated 6 October in which he asks if there are any suggested areas where the Whitehall Departments might want to consider thickening their relations with Dublin.
3. I should be grateful if any suggestions (or nil returns) could be with me by lunchtime on **Friday 10 October** please.

*JBlack*

**J A BLACK (MRS)  
Ext 28167**

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~~David Brooker~~ Brown  
6/13

FROM: DAVID BROOKER  
IPL DIVISION  
6 OCTOBER 1997

*Michael Kelly*  
*Re x - see below exercise*  
*can be done.*  
*Re y - what Dept's be asked*  
*for ideas?*

cc: Mr Bell  
Mr Stephens  
Mr Beeton  
Mr Hill  
Mr Fergusson  
Mrs Sear

ASST 08 58/10  
SEC - 6 OCT 1997  
CENT URGENT

MR WATKINS 6/10

*Mrs Black*  
*Can you get out the*  
*East/West file + discuss*  
*pl?*  
*We need to ask Dept*  
*for info on y.*  
*Michael Kelly*  
*7/10/97*

**EAST/WEST CO-OPERATION**

You may recall that on 16 July the Foreign Secretary wrote to all members of the Cabinet inviting them to consider ways in which contacts with the Irish could be strengthened and revitalised. The Cabinet Office was asked to co-ordinate a progress report later in the year. The Foreign Secretary's initiative was endorsed by the Prime Minister in a minute from his Private Secretary on 22 July. Copies of both minutes are attached.

2. The Cabinet Office and the Office of the Taoiseach have agreed to meet in early November to consider progress on bilateral co-operation. In practice this means a meeting between Colin Budd's successor, Michael (?) Pakenham and Wally Kirwan. I believe that a date of Monday 10 November is being discussed.

3. In advance of that meeting, Cabinet Office are trawling Whitehall Departments asking for reports on areas where co-operation is already taking place with the Irish, and where further progress is hoped to be made. The Cabinet Office then intend to draw the various reports together into a single document which, after discussion by the Official Committee on Anglo-Irish relations, would be sent to the Irish Government. As you may recall I attended the earlier meeting of AIO back in the Summer.

4. I have talked to Nick Sanderson about how best we can contribute to this exercise. It is, of course, essentially geared towards East/West co-operation between Dublin and Whitehall Departments. In that sense there is no direct onus on us to respond. I did suggest, however, that if a list were already available on the shelf, it might be helpful for us to inject a paper on areas of co-operation between Northern Ireland Departments and

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4 | Dublin. This might help stimulate thinking in Whitehall. Mr Sanderson thought that this was a good idea. If, from our own contacts with the Irish we were also able to suggest areas where the Whitehall Departments might want to consider thickening their relations with Dublin, that would also be helpful.

5. I should be glad to know if you agree with these two suggestions. When suggesting that we might provide a list I half recollected that you had recently compiled a schedule for Mr Ingram on existing North/South contacts. Could that easily be amended into an anodyne version for Whitehall? And are there obvious gaps in East/West co-operation at the moment which, from our slightly detached position, we might want to point out? Cabinet Office have asked for returns by Monday 13 October, and I should therefore be grateful for your comments by then. We might also consider nearer the time whether it would be useful for a representative of Central Secretariat to accompany me to the next AIO meeting if there are specialist matters under discussion. ||

**DAVID BROOKER**  
11 Millbank, ☎ 6587

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PM/97/028PRIME MINISTERUK/Irish Relations

1. Your meeting with the Taoiseach on 3 July was inevitably dominated by discussion of Northern Ireland. But there was agreement in principle to developing the wider relationship. A Fianna Fail-led Government may be less instinctively committed to improving the relationship across the board. But Ahern is a pragmatist. He has spoken privately to our Ambassador and in public of the possibility of developing a new era in UK/Irish relations. Better so-called "East/West" relations have intrinsic value and will improve the climate for our exchanges with the Irish over Northern Ireland.

2. Now that Irish Ministers have their feet under the table, and following up your meeting with Ahern, we should therefore develop specific proposals. Before their election, the Irish signalled interest in a number of areas, including food safety. For our part, we stand to gain from enhanced cooperation on a range of issues, including military links, social security and education. There would be advantage in developing a sustained dialogue with the Irish Justice Department. We also need to address our handling of environmental policy: nuclear issues are particularly sensitive and have been given added prominence by recent revelations about Beaufort's Dyke.

3. We have identified cooperation in the youth sector as a particularly valuable area to support. In particular, we should look for ways in which we and the Irish could establish a common agenda of benefit to the young unemployed. The Franco-German Youth Office have programmes

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which, they claim, have an 80% success rate of getting young people into jobs after training and time spent in the partner country. There are many sectors in which young people from the UK and the Republic could benefit from experience gained in the other country: agriculture, tourism, retail, software development and the food and drink industries are obvious examples. If we were able to devise practical, joint programmes in this area, we could look to the Ambassadors in both countries to engage the groups of business people with whom they meet regularly. They could seek practical support and funding. It would be helpful to the image of British companies in Ireland if they were seen to be engaged in an effort to address youth unemployment in their host country. I know that the DFEE already has good links with the Irish through youth exchanges, EU contacts and representation on the Employment and Labour Market Committee on which they might build.

4. It would be very helpful if colleagues could seek reports from their officials about existing contacts with the Irish and consider ways in which they could be strengthened and revitalised. Personal contacts between officials and Ministers of the two Governments are particularly valuable. The FCO's Republic of Ireland Department would be happy to act as a sounding board for any proposed initiatives.

5. In the past the Cabinet Office and the Taoiseach's Office have produced coordinated reports on cooperation between the two Governments. It might be helpful if, later in the year, the Cabinet Office could ask Departments to report further on their relationships with the Republic of Ireland.

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7 Oct '97 15:27 P.07/08

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6. I am copying this minute to members of the Cabinet, to Sir Robin Butler and to HM Ambassador in Dublin.

*Robin Cook*

ROBIN COOK

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
16 July 1997

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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

22 July 1997

*Dear William,*

**UK/IRISH RELATIONS**

The Prime Minister was grateful for the Foreign Secretary's minute of 16 July about further efforts to develop the relationship between Britain and the Irish Republic. He very much agrees that this is worth doing, and hopes that Cabinet colleagues will do all they can to encourage contacts in the various fields.

I am copying this to Private Secretaries to other Members of the Cabinet, to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office) and to Veronica Sutherland in Dublin.

*Yours  
John*

**JOHN HOLMES**

William Ehrman Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office