



*Original in C/12*

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

19 September 1979

Dear Nicholas

Thank you for your letter of 29 August concerning the recent tragic events in Ireland.

I share the feeling of horror which you have expressed on behalf of your constituents at the brutal murder of Lord Mountbatten and the killing of 18 soldiers at Warrenpoint. As I made clear at the time, the Government will spare no effort to ensure that those responsible for these and similar terrorist outrages are brought to justice.

I do not accept that we are dealing with the terrorists with, to use your words, "kid gloves on". The security forces are constantly changing and refining their methods of operation in order to defeat the terrorists. As regards co-operation between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, Mr. Lynch agreed with me at our recent meeting that a substantial improvement was required. Such an improvement would further enhance the effectiveness of our security forces.

Great difficulties remain. There will be setbacks. But I do not agree that in the present circumstances the introduction of martial law would assist the security forces. There would be a grave risk that its principle effect would be to alienate ordinary law-abiding people from the forces of law and order.

/You enclosed with



You enclosed with your letter the Northern Ireland medal which Mr. Beaven has returned as a mark of his outrage at what occurred on 27 August. I sympathise with his feelings. If Mr. Beaven insists, I will of course have his medal returned to the Army Medal Office. But if, on reflection, he would prefer to retain the medal I would be happy to arrange for it to be sent back to him.

Yours ever

MT

Nicholas Winterton, Esq., MP