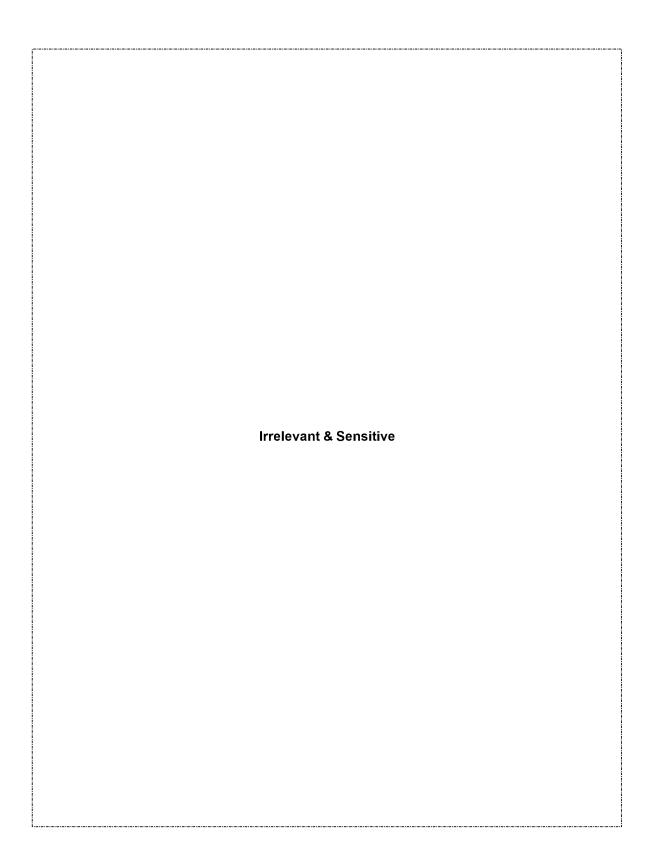
TAOISEACH VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND

STEER

	Northern Ireland as rotating Taoiseach. This will provide you with the opportunity to <u>personally congratulate him</u> on his appointment and <u>reinforce</u> the importance of maintaining and strengthening the close ties between Ireland and the UK.
2.	
3.	Irrelevant & Sensitive
4.	

1. You are due to meet Micheál [Me-haul] Martin on Thursday on his first visit to



OTHER TOPICAL ISSUES

Covid-19

- I am working closely with the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the
 rest of the Executive to deliver a co-ordinated approach in responding to
 Covid-19. My officials and I are in daily contact with Northern Ireland
 businesses and representatives of other sectors across Northern Ireland to
 work with them.
- Covid-19 is on the decline in NI. In recent weeks we have had a number of days with no new positive cases being reported by laboratories and deaths are falling. It is also extremely heartening to hear there are currently no COVID-19 related patients in ICUs in Northern Ireland.
- Every death from this virus is a tragedy and we recognise the work of our social care workers, nurses, doctors and many others on the frontline over the last few months.

Background

- As of 0900, 13 July for NI:
 - 155,009 HSC Laboratory tests have been completed This equates to 122,403 individuals being tested).
 - 5,790 confirmed cases in Northern Ireland with 20 positive cases in the last 7 days (down 4 from last week).

	 The total coronavirus deaths (confirmed by a positive test) is 556.
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