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From the Private Secretary

15 July 1996

Dee Martin,

AFTERMATH OF THE MARCHES

I have had a number of conversations with Paddy Teahon over the weekend and today. I will not try to give you a blow by blow account. We have inevitably gone over the ground of the Chief Constable's decision at Drumcree several times, and the mutual incomprehension which has resulted. Teahon knows that we were incensed by Bruton's interview. He has stressed to me the intensity of the Nationalist anger over the Chief Constable's decision. We have agreed that, whatever happens, we need to keep talking to each other.

Teahon has also passed on various strands in current Irish thinking, as follows:

- i. The Irish are very keen for a new mechanism on marches which will involve more consultation with them, and for an independent commission. Their immediate focus is the Apprentice Boys' March on 13 August. They clearly want to be involved in discussions of how this should be handled, although I have warned Teahon of the sensitivities of this. Meanwhile, the Irish Government are planning a ministerial meeting with the Garvaghy Road and Ormeau Road residents this week to allow them to express their views directly.
- ii. As you will be aware, they are planning a "high profile" meeting with Sinn Fein later this week (probably Wednesday), at senior official level. They take the view that Sinn Fein have done a lot to rehabilitate themselves over the past week, by their relative restraint. Sinn Fein have given them a message that a new ceasefire is still attainable, perhaps at the end of August rather than now, with the second anniversary of the last ceasefire seen as a day of particular significance. Like the Americans, the Irish are beginning to press for us to renew our own official level contacts with Sinn Fein, no doubt at the prompting of Adams. On the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Enniskillen bomb, Pat Doherty spoke to Teahon at length on Sunday morning to assure him that the IRA had nothing to do with it.

- iii. The Irish want to use the events of last week to put pressure on to speed up the Belfast talks. They hope that Trimble will have more room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis his own community, following Drumcree. The Irish are also inclined to wonder whether any real progress is possible if the agreement of Paisley and McCartney is required, and therefore to wonder how they might be by-passed. They are interested in Mitchell using more intensive bilateral contacts to press things forward.

I am copying this to William Ehrman (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office) and Veronica Sutherland in Dublin by fax.

Yours are
John

JOHN HOLMES

Martin Howard Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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