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Edward
we have now agreed to an *19C.* *16157* *file*
John 15/7.

SUBJECT: EVENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND: CONVERSATION WITH PADDY TEAHON

Summary

1. Irish Government to meet tonight to review the situation in Northern Ireland. Official contacts with Sinn Fein to resume on 17 July. Continuing widespread anger at British handling of events at Drumcree and after.

Detail

2. I spoke to Paddy Teahon this morning to balance the extremely negative conversation I had with Sean O'hUiginn on Friday. (My letter of 12 July to John Holmes). He explained that the Taoiseach's statement on Friday evening had stemmed from a need to pre-empt an even more violent reaction from Sinn Fein. I told him that the particular language used had been unacceptable from one of Head of Government to another.

3. We then turned to the practical opportunities over the next few days. He said that the Irish Government were meeting tonight to review the situation. The main focus would be the meetings in Belfast tomorrow. Their hope would be that these would provide the opportunity for participants to vent their frustrations without inciting further violence. He hoped too that the Tanaiste and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would be able to speak in the margins.

4. On Wednesday, contacts with Sinn Fein would resume at official level. Teahon did not say so directly, but the Irish no doubt hope that the possibility of renewing the cease-fire still exists.

5. Finally, Teahon emphasised the importance the Irish Government attached to close cooperation between the two

Governments. He hoped very much there could be an early agreement on a date for an IGC. He thought it essential that the two Governments should try and inject some purpose into the talks process. There was a need to ensure that Messrs Trimble, Paisley and McCartney demonstrated a more positive attitude. So far in spite of Trimble's agreement to Senator Mitchell as Chairman, their influence had been almost wholly negative. He speculated that perhaps the two Governments should have some role in breaking the logjam by asking Senator Mitchell to talk to all parties separately in the hope of finding some mutual ground. On a more pressing note, it was essential that the two Governments discuss the handling of the Apprentice Boys' March scheduled for 14 August.

Comment

6. Feelings about the RUC's action at Drumcree continue to ride high. There is widespread incomprehension that this was an operational decision out of the control of the British Government. Few here also believe that had the demonstrators on the Garvaghy Road been unionists rather than nationalists, they would have been treated in the same fashion.

7. Comments by politicians very much reflect popular anger. We understand from Fine Gael sources that the Taoiseach was under considerable pressure from his own back-benchers to "lay into the Brits", and that this, more than anything, was what motivated his remarks on 12 July.

8. Since then, the Taoiseach has adopted a more measured tone, and has pointedly avoided repeating his charge that the prime Minister had yielded to force. Speaking to journalists yesterday, for example, he strongly condemned the Enniskillen bombing and the "apparently quite organised", rioting that had taken place in Northern Ireland. He contrasted these actions with the dignity and restraint shown by the residents of Garvaghy Road in the face of provocation.

9. I realise that early agreement to an IGC may cause difficulties in London. But seen from here it would do much to defuse the anger which is being expressed by normally moderate people both in the Government and outside.

SUTHERLAND