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From the Private Secretary

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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

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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.

ON SOUTHERN IRELAND

1. As I told you on the telephone, Mary Soderberg spoke to me this morning, apparently before receiving reports of the Yachtman's television interview last night.

2. Soderberg said she had been in touch with the usual people - Hume, Adams, Keating, other Irish Americans. They were all mad at the Unionists, the RUC and the British Government. No one believed that the decision to allow the Drumcree march to proceed - "the dumbest decision imaginable" - had been taken by the Chief Constable alone. It had showed that violence paid, and had reinforced the prejudices of those who had always doubted British good faith. It also, the Nationalists claimed, made it easier for the IRA to justify its continuing commissioning, and harder to achieve a new IRA.

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3. I interrupted to say that those who criticised the Chief Constable's decision had to ask themselves what might have happened if the ban on the Orange march had been maintained. It was possible to disagree with some of the judgements made, but absurd to accuse any of those responsible for the difficult decisions which had to be taken of bad faith. Soderberg said that the decision itself was not the point. The Nationalists were upset about how it had been taken. If the Chief Constable had decided that he had to reverse his earlier decision, he, and local political leaders, should have explained to everyone concerned what was going to happen and why. The only local consultations which had taken place had been with the Unionist communities. That said, Soderberg said she had argued strongly to all her interlocutors that the problems which had arisen were the result of chaos, not design. But she hadn't found many takers.

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