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By fax:

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LONDON SW1A 2AABritish Embassy
Dublin

27 September 1996

File

JH 27/9

John Holmes, Esq
No 10 Downing Street.

Dear John,

IRISH/SINN FEIN CONTACTS

1. Thank you for copying me your letter of 26 September to Ken Lindsey. As I told Edward Oakden last night, I have awaited this before reporting my conversation with Paddy Teahon yesterday afternoon.

3. It is clear from your letter that he spoke in similar terms to us both (not always a foregone conclusion). I share your impression that he remains unduly optimistic about a ceasefire. I emphasised, as you did, the document we would be sending to Hume was not identical to the original we had received. Teahon commented that he did not really think this mattered. I expressed scepticism.

4. Another point Teahon made at some length related to his conviction that the Sinn Fein leadership retained a certain sense of honour. If I understood Paddy correctly he believes that because Adams and McGuinness have spoken so much about working towards a ceasefire, they will feel under some obligation to deliver. Once again I expressed scepticism on this point. I suspect - although I did not say this to Paddy - that he is falling into his usual trap of wishful thinking.

5. Paddy also said that he and his colleagues (Tim Dalton and Sean O'hUiginn) had spent some time in discussion with Sinn Fein trying to determine if they had thought out any strategy in relation to talks, and in particular whether they had any coherent position on the three Strands. The answer appeared to be no.

Yours ever,

Veronica

Veronica Sutherland
AMBASSADOR

cc: Mr K Lindsey, PAB, NIO
Mr Dominic Chilcott, FCO
Ms Jan Polley, Cabinet Office.

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