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British Embassy
Dublin

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11 March 1997

BY FAX

John Holmes Esq
No 10
Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear John,

LUNCH WITH PADDY TEAHON: 11 MARCH

1. I had lunch today with Paddy Teahon - another very friendly occasion (cf your letter of 5 March to Ken Lindsay).
2. Paddy was clearly in pre-holiday mood and discussion was discursive. He had no further news of a possible renewed ceasefire. The following points arose:
 - i) The Taoiseach, Paddy thought, had abandoned his idea of making a public statement about the peace process either with or without the Prime Minister. (Comment: Paddy did not say what had led to this conclusion but I suspect it was the Prime Minister's lack of enthusiasm for such an initiative.)
 - ii) As Paddy told you this morning, the Taoiseach would like to talk on the telephone to the Prime Minister. Paddy was not clear about the points to be covered, but thought the Taoiseach wanted a general chat about the current situation in the wake of the suspension of the all-party talks in Belfast.
 - iii) Paddy expressed bemusement about the Prime Minister's apparent reluctance to talk to the Taoiseach. He referred to your comment about irritation following press comment on the content of the last conversation, and specifically to the exchange about Bloody Sunday. I told Paddy that I was not familiar with the details. I suspected however that the Prime Minister was less concerned with what had been said publicly about Bloody Sunday, and more about the fact that whenever he spoke to the Taoiseach, this always appeared in the Irish press. I asked Paddy to try and understand that, unless the Prime Minister could be sure that his conversations would receive no press coverage (other than by mutual agreement), then his concerns would continue.

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- iv) In Paddy's personal opinion, not necessarily shared by the Taoiseach, a solution in Northern Ireland would only be found through some kind of Sunningdale or Lancaster House arrangement whereby the parties (or at least those of them willing to participate) would be closetted together until they had reached an agreed conclusion. I pointed to the obvious difficulties.
- v) Paddy was very much looking forward to his game of golf with you at Mount Juliet. His understanding was that April 28-29 might be good days. If so, this would leave open the possibility that he and one or two colleagues might visit London the previous week for dinner with John Chilcot. I will pursue this with him separately.
3. Perhaps we could have a word on the telephone tomorrow morning about iii) and v) above.

*Yours ever,**Vernia*

V E Sutherland
HM Ambassador

cc: K Lindsay Esq, NIO
Sir John Chilcot, NIO
W Ehrman Esq, FCO
Jan Polley, Cabinet Office
C Budd Esq, Cabinet Office