

19/05/97

15:20

NO. 247

D02

DUBLIN

MON 19 MAY 97 16:01

PG.02

RESTRICTED

British Embassy
Dublin
 CC PB
 JPO
 AC
 J. Polley

19 May 1997

J Holmes Esq
PS/No.10

By Fax

 F.6
 JH 19/5.

Dear John,

DISCUSSIONS WITH PADDY TEAHON

1. I have read with interest your three faxes of 18 May. On the Prime Minister's speech you will have seen my telegram number 158 recording the favourable reaction here.
2. As I mentioned to you on the telephone on Saturday, I called on Paddy Teahon late on Friday afternoon. I had a further telephone conversation this morning, when he rehearsed the points in your letter on contacts with Sinn Fein.
3. In both conversations Paddy expounded at some length on our failure to engage substantively at the talks on 8 May, and to consult in advance about the speech. The Irish side were hurt, Paddy said. I responded by saying that to expect substantive engagement from a government which had been in office for under a week was unrealistic; and that prior consultation on the speech risked unwelcome leaks, of which there had been a number of unfortunate examples. I encouraged Paddy to follow the example of Dr Mowlam, who is reported as saying that she has learnt to have a short memory on issues of this nature. Paddy had the grace to laugh.
4. I am quite clear that we did, as you say, act properly over both the meeting and the speech. However, all this does underline the central message of my minute of 2 May, "Working with the Irish on Northern Ireland", which emphasised the crucial importance of close personal relationships between members of the two Governments.

 Yours ever,
 Veronica
Veronica Sutherland
Ambassadorcc: K Lindsay Esq, PS/SofS, NIC
J. Polley Esq, PS/SofS, FCO