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British Embassy
Dublin

Tap - JEM
cc J. Polley
PB
AC

25 September 1997

J Holmes Esq
PS/No.10

By fax

F.4
J. 26/9.

Dear John,

CALL ON PADDY TEAHON

1. I have followed with interest (and admiration) the records of your various conversations with the key individuals involved in the Northern Ireland talks.
2. I called on Paddy Teahon yesterday, just to check that he was content with the way things were going. He confirmed that he was, and his optimism was validated by the announcement later in the evening that the talks would move to substantive issues next week.
3. I also cross-checked with Paddy David Trimble's assertion (your letter of 23 September) that the Irish Government would not engage in discussion with Unionists. Paddy said the reverse was true: Mr Burke and the Irish team would be only too keen to talk to the Unionists. It was the latter who were reluctant. Comment: I may be able to help on this in a small way: Jeffrey Donaldson told me some weeks ago that he would like to visit Dublin to talk to Fianna Fail TDs. I shall follow this up when I am in Belfast next week.
4. Little else of interest emerged, although Paddy mentioned that Robin Butler had told him during his recent visit to Dublin that before he retired he would launch regular Butler/Teahon dinners. This contradicted what Robin Butler told me over breakfast on Tuesday but I did not like to disillusion Paddy!

Yours ever,

Veronica

Veronica Sutherland
Ambassador

cc: J Grant Esq, PS/SofS, FCO
Ms Jan Polley, Cabinet Office
Sir J Kerr KCMG, Washington
PS/SofS, NIO