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FROM: Mrs V E Sutherland, HMA, Dublin  
 DATE: 24 October 1997

to PM's Party. 24/10

cc: PS/SofS (B&L)  
 PS/Mr Ingram  
 PS/Mr Murphy  
 PS/PUS  
 PS/Mr John Sample  
 Mr Steele  
 Mr Stephens  
 Mr Leach  
 Mr Bell  
 Mr Hill  
 Mr Brooker  
 Ms Bharucha  
 Mr Maccabe  
 Mr Fergusson, RID  
 Mr Tebbit (via RID)  
 PUSD (via RID)  
 Mr John Holmes, PS/No.10 (by fax)  
 The Hon M A Pakenham, Cabinet Office (by fax)  
 Mr David Cooke, Cabinet Office (by fax)

Mr Thomas

# CONVERSATION WITH THE TAOISEACH : 23 OCTOBER

1. I sat next to the Taoiseach at the Dublin Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner. Our conversation was much interrupted but some points are worth recording.

STRAND II: The Taoiseach said he believed an acceptable outcome would be the establishment of a number of cross-border bodies with executive powers in non-contentious areas e.g. health, social affairs, education, culture and sport. There was already a great deal of cross-border cooperation on all these issues and a large number of all-Ireland bodies. He referred to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, and the many sporting teams and cultural organisations.

I asked about Mr Andrews' statements on Articles 2 and 3. The Taoiseach said that the Minister had made a mistake. He had handled the issue clumsily. The Taoiseach gave me the impression that he was seriously irritated with the Minister.

On the Maryfield leaks the Taoiseach said he was pretty clear as to who was responsible and it was neither John Bruton nor Sean Donlon. He deplored this behaviour, particularly as it had cast a serious shadow both over the conduct of the Presidential election and over the integrity of Maryfield. He seemed confident nevertheless that Mary McAleese would win the election.

We touched briefly on the various parties in the North. The Taoiseach said he was convinced that Adams and McGuinness really did want an agreement and would settle for something less than a united Ireland. He wished the Unionists were readier to engage with the Irish Government. Jeffrey Donaldson was prepared to talk, but he had found it impossible to set up a dialogue with David Trimble.

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2. The Taoiseach told me how much he had enjoyed meeting Mr Murphy. He was in cheerful mood and did not dwell on any of his current difficulties.

(SIGNED)

Veronica Sutherland  
Ambassador

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