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From the Principal Private Secretary

10 February 1998

Dec Ken,

IRISH VIEWS

Paddy Teahon rang me this evening, mainly to make a couple of bilateral points which I will not bother you with. But he was also strikingly gloomy about the events during the day, ie the two murders. He said that he thought they would cause us a lot of problems - he did not like what he had heard. The Irish had been aware that a further bout of heart searching had been going on within the republican movement, but they had hoped that they were coming out on the right side. He was not so sure now. The difficulty was that the movement was facing the crunch - they were not going to get a united Ireland now.

Teahon added that the Taoiseach was taking the view that we had to behave consistently over these attacks, ie in line with what we had done over the UDP. This meant both not rushing to judgement, but also looking facts in the face. I said that I entirely agreed with that approach.

Teahon went on to talk elliptically about the Irish work on producing a draft agreement. He had hoped that they might be able to table something (he may have said we might be able to table something) within a week or so. But today's events would probably set that back. He commented that the most difficult areas of all would be how to reconcile Sinn Fein's insistence on the "dynamic" element of North/South structures with the Unionists' extreme hostility to any such concept.

Teahon incidentally confirmed there was likely to be a dinner between the Irish and the UUP in Dublin next week. I said we encouraged these contacts.

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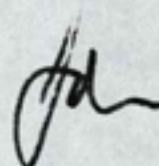
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- 2 -

I am copying this letter to John Grant (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office), Sir Christopher Meyer (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

Yours ever



JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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