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EMBASSY OF IRELAND

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Secure Fax

13 October 1996

LOYALIST PRISONERS

COPY TO:	+ 14
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MR. P. TEAHON	
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Dear Secretary

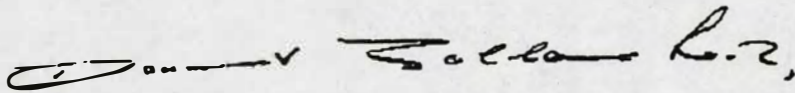
- As reported already by Pat Hennessy, the NSC put some considerable pressure on John Holmes at their meeting on Friday to show movement on the Loyalist prisoners issue. Lake and Soderberg believe that a gesture in this area would give encouragement to the Loyalist political leadership and, most importantly, help to underpin their ceasefire. Holmes' initial response was to argue that the British had no political prisoners. However, he went on to say that he did not see how it could be done, though giving the impression that he was not completely ruling it out.
- The NSC said they would very much appreciate any suggestions we might have on a formula that would enable this to be taken forward. They would also like to have the names of some Loyalist prisoners who might come under such a formula, and whose release would be especially helpful to the leadership. They would then press the British hard on this.

Ervine/McMichael

- The White House has spoken in recent days to Ervine and McMichael and found them very determined to maintain the ceasefire. Compared to the Official Unionists, they are considered to be a "breath of fresh air" here and are, to take one example, consistently very frank and open about how far they can go on any issue. On the

other hand, the White House is quite frustrated at present with the Official Unionists. They are, for instance, even finding it difficult to have a decent discussion with Jeffrey Donaldson, whom they always found in the past to be extremely open and forthcoming. They added that the British at the moment are also quite fed up with David Trimble.

Yours sincerely



Dermot Gallagher
Ambassador

Seán Ó hUiginn Uas
Secretary
Anglo-Irish Division
Department of Foreign Affairs