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PS/MS/sofs(B) - M
PS/MS SCOTT(LTB) - M
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PS/MS BLOOMFIELD - M
MR BURNS -
MR CHESTERTON -
12 March 1987
MR ELLIOTT - 11/15
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MR BEU

From the Private Secretary

3/sofs TO
SEC

Dear David,

HEAD OF THE N.I.
CIVIL SERVICE

PRIME MINISTER'S BILATERAL WITH THE NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY

The Prime Minister had a talk with the Northern Ireland Secretary this evening.

The Prime Minister and Northern Ireland Secretary agreed that Mr. Haughey's statement in the Dail on 10 March about the Anglo-Irish Agreement (see paragraph 7 of Dublin telegram number 103) was unhelpful. We should make clear that the United Kingdom remained fully committed to the Agreement. We should also need to find a way of discouraging any further utterances on these lines and persuading the new Irish Government to endorse the Anglo-Irish Agreement in its entirety and without reservations. One possibility would be to get the United States to put pressure on Mr. Haughey. The Prime Minister would be grateful if the Foreign Secretary could consider this urgently. The Northern Ireland Secretary said that, as soon as it was confirmed that Mr. Lenihan would be appointed co-chairman of the Intergovernmental Conference, he proposed to invite him for a talk in London, in which he would explore the position. It must be clear that any attempt to reopen the Agreement stemmed from the Irish Government and not the United Kingdom.

There was also some discussion of the tentative approach from Mr. Molyneaux and Dr. Paisley for a meeting with the Prime Minister. As you know, they have asked for their request to be put on hold for the time being. The Prime Minister said that her instinctive feeling was that they were not yet ready for a serious talk. The Unionists still did not know where they were going (although your Secretary of State pointed out that they had now set up a task force to consider this). She thought it most unlikely that any progress could be made with them before elections in the United Kingdom.

Your Secretary of State reported that there was further evidence that opinion in Northern Ireland was slowly becoming accustomed to the Agreement. The Unionists would never like it. But it was becoming less of a neuralgic point and they were finding it harder and harder to mount effective protests against the Agreement. Most people just wanted to get on with life.

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I am copying this letter to Tony Galsworthy (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Powell
(C.D. POWELL)

David Watkins, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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