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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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SECRETARY OF STATE

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File

for 11/7.

10 July 1996

Prime Minister

This attaches what
I said to you this
morning. This is
in case the decision is
taken to try to block
access to Putnam
on 12 July.

Dear John,

REINFORCEMENTS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Following my letter of earlier today the Secretary of State has had further discussions on the security situation in Northern Ireland with the General Officer Commanding and the Assistant Chief of the General Staff here.

It is clear that the situation is becoming more difficult and, in the expectation of some very large demonstrations over the coming days, the GOC believes that there is a military requirement for both additional battalions to be deployed into theatre as soon as possible. The Secretary of State has considered this request very carefully and has agreed that we shall deploy these troops as fast as we are able.

On current estimates we therefore expect the Spearhead Battalion (1 Battalion the Parachute Regiment) to be complete in theatre in the early hours of Thursday morning and the Notice to Train Battalion (1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment) by the early hours of Friday morning.

I am sending copies of this letter to Martin Howard (NIO) and to Tony Pawson and Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Mike
(M A VENABLES)
Private Secretary

J Holmes Esq
10 Downing Street

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