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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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*Dear John,***BRIEF FOR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH THE TAOISEACH**

My Secretary of State agrees it would be desirable for the Prime Minister to have a word with the Taoiseach now the talks have broken for the Summer. As requested, I have also attached a background note and lines to take regarding parades, in the event the Taoiseach raises this subject.

**Northern Ireland Talks**

As the attached background note brings out, constitutional nationalism is in some disarray and nervous of the electoral and political gains which Sinn Fein have made in recent weeks. They are suspicious and critical of the Unionists and occasionally doubtful of HMG's determination to see the talks steered to a constructive conclusion (by which they all too often mean simply facing up to the Unionists). They, and the Chairmen, are also inclined to look to HMG to deliver the UUP, which virtually guarantees "sufficient consensus", without appreciating the limits on the political feasibility of David Trimble constantly exposing his flank to the DUP/UKUP.





The talks undoubtedly face a very serious test on resumption in September as they tackle the question of how to address the decommissioning issue, but it would have been unrealistic to expect otherwise. It took the two Governments several months, including after the publication of the International Body's report, to compromise on a possible approach: the parties have, if anything, even more deeply held views on the issue. The two Governments must work together to find a way forward. A crucial requirement will be to raise the current rock bottom level of understanding and mutual confidence between the various participants, especially between the Irish Government and the UUP.

I am sending copies of this letter to William Ehrman (FCO), to Sir John Kerr in Washington and to Colin Budd and Jan Polley at the Cabinet Office.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*Robert Crawford*

ROBERT CRAWFORD