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PRIVATE OFFICE

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

8 October 1996

From the Private Secretary

Dear Gen,

LISBURN BOMBS

I have spoken to Paddy Teahon several times today. He said initially that he thought Republican Sinn Fein were probably responsible. However he quickly amended this view later in the morning, saying that the consensus of the Irish authorities was that it looked more like the work of PIRA.

He rang me again this afternoon. He had just met Sinn Fein. They had said simply that they did not know who had carried out the bombing. Teahon noted that this was a different formulation from past occasions when PIRA had not been responsible for a bomb. Meanwhile the Irish authorities, like ourselves, were sceptical about the claim from the Continuity Army Council.

Sinn Fein had gone on to reassure Teahon in the strongest terms that the Hume/Adams initiative was still very much on. They confirmed that, as I had heard from Hume, further consultation was needed. This was taking place, and there would not be a response for some days.

Sinn Fein had also shown considerable interest in the reference to decommissioning in the draft text we had sent to Hume. Was the Irish Government position really the same as the British Government position? Teahon had said that the Irish Government position was absolutely clear, and based on the Mitchell compromise. Teahon commented that Sinn Fein were obviously looking for sympathy from the Irish Government for a softer position

I am copying this letter to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office) and to Veronica Sutherland in Dublin (by fax).

Yours are
John

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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