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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

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From the Private Secretary

3 September 1996
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Dear Gen,

THE TALKS PROCESS: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

The Prime Minister was grateful for Sir Patrick Mayhew's minute of 2 September and the overview it gave of the prospects for the talks when they resume on 9 September. He was only able to look at this briefly before leaving for a visit to Scotland, but he is broadly content with the approach set out, in particular on decommissioning. He agrees that it will be crucial to reach an understanding with the UUP on decommissioning. However I should warn you that it will not be easy for the Prime Minister to play a personal role in this in the coming weeks since he is absent from London for much of the time.

I am copying this to Dominick Chilcott (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

Yours etc

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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