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The Rt Hon Viscount Cresswell DL  
Lord  
House  
63 Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AT

cc: P81 Secretary of State (L+B)

P81 Michael Ancram (L+B)

P81 PWS

P81 Sir David Bell

Mr Thomas

Mr Bell

Mr Leach

Mr Warkentin

Mr Beeton

Mr HM

Mr Vaccaro

Mr Stephen

Mr Coleman.

FLOATS

*in*  
*John*

3. September 1996

The following are the proposals which I am prepared now to make  
forthwith to the leaders of NI parties represented in  
the House for their opinions.  
It may be useful to you to have this in your back pocket when you  
talk to the relevant parties, following our talk this afternoon.

These are by means of

John  
PWS

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Viscount Cranborne DL  
Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the  
House of Lords  
68 Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AT

3 September 1996

*Dear Robert:*

The following are the proposals which I am prepared now to make forthwith in a letter to the leaders of NI parties represented in the House of Commons for their opinions.

It may be helpful to you to have this in your back pocket when you talk to David Trimble, following our talk this afternoon.

*Hope this by sends soon.*

*Yours faithfully*  
*John G. [Signature]*

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PROPOSALS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND GRAND COMMITTEE

- i) Northern Ireland Office Ministers might make a PES statement to the Grand Committee in place of the present briefing arrangements;
- ii) Northern Ireland Ministers might make statements and take questions in Committee on a regular basis;
- iii) other members of Cabinet and other Departmental Ministers whose responsibilities extend to Northern Ireland might make statements and take questions before the Committee;
- iv) some Grand committee meetings might be held in a Northern Ireland venue;
- v) greater use might be made of the existing power to hold both general debates and those intended to consider Proposals for draft Orders in Council; and
- vi) additional powers might be provided for the Committee to take evidence on draft legislation.

For the moment, these changes will only involve those Ministers in the House of Commons (as they do for the Scottish and Welsh Office).

If any of these changes are adopted (especially iv), there will be consequences for House business, particularly in arranging the attendance of the 25 "other" members of the Committee from GB constituencies.