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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

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John Holmes Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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*File
mrgi**cc: PB
Press*

20 January 1997

Dear John

NORTHERN IRELAND TALKS: ENTRY AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

In the controversy over the recent attacks by loyalist paramilitaries, and their implications for the position of the loyalist parties in the Northern Ireland talks, there has been a good deal of confusion about the basis on which those parties might be excluded and the (quite different) basis on which Sinn Fein might enter. This has probably contributed to the allegations that we are applying double standards, though no doubt they would have arisen anyway.

My Secretary of State therefore thought it might be useful to circulate to NI colleagues a note on the basis of these questions. I attach such a note, accompanied by several lines suitable for public use.

I am copying this to Private Secretaries to the members of NI Committee, and to Jan Polley and Colin Budd in the Cabinet Office.

Signed

ROBERT CRAWFORD

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