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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

file
for
27/9.

COPY

REH

From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister

26 September 1996

As discussed.

Irish Officials met Jim Fein
earlier today. McGuinness said there would
be a ceasefire if the talks moved on to
the three strands and if we made a
statement along the lines sent to us by
Hume. We shall see. John 26/9.

It was agreed at the last meeting of NI on 19 September that the Prime Minister should respond to John Hume's latest approach, once the text on what we proposed to say about our policy had been adjusted and the UUP had been prewarned. Despite the discovery of arms and explosives on Monday, the Prime Minister believes that we should still go ahead with this response. David Trimble has been briefed about Hume's approach and our proposed reply, and has declared himself content. The Prime Minister therefore proposes to reply to Hume tomorrow. I attach a slightly revised letter, and accompanying text.

As you will see, the text is now in the form of a press article, to be signed by the Prime Minister, which we aim to place in one of the national newspapers, probably on Tuesday 1 October. We will brief key interested parties in advance to ensure that the article is not misunderstood in any quarter.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of other members of NI Committee and to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

John

JOHN HOLMES

Mark Gibson
Deputy Prime Minister's Office

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