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From: JOHN HOLMES

Date: 17 September 1996

PRIME MINISTER

FAXED
to chequers 17/9.

HUME/ADAMS INITIATIVE: NI PAPER

NI is now fixed for 0900 on Thursday. We need to circulate a paper tomorrow morning. The NIO have sent us a draft which I think is inadequate in terms of presentation for NI - both in readability and from a tactical point of view.

... I have therefore recast it. I attach my version, including Annexes. I have not sent you theirs, to avoid even more paper, but obviously can if you wish. The substance is not very different but the slant is, particularly the degree of scepticism about the possibility of a new ceasefire.

As the paper suggests, discussion with the UUP on decommissioning is going quite well this week. Paddy will be ready to talk more about this at the meeting. He may also have a chance to talk to Trimble in the margins of a meeting tomorrow to warn him in very general terms about the Hume/Adams approach. His (justified) concern is to ensure that Trimble hears about this from us first, not from Cranborne. Any views on this? I think it is a good idea, if the atmosphere is right (he and Trimble are getting on very well at the moment).

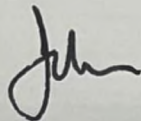
Content with my version, including the Annexes? I will ring you reasonably early tomorrow morning (after the Today programme) to check.

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On a procedural point, are you happy for Paddy to be accompanied to NI by both Michael Ancram and John Wheeler. They both have a legitimate interest - and Wheeler will be particularly upset if he is left out, not least since he remains highly sceptical about IRA intentions himself.



JOHN HOLMES

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