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From: John Holmes
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PRIME MINISTER

NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you
/ RZ

An update on a few points may be helpful.

Sunday is the anniversary of the end of the ceasefire and the Canary Wharf bomb, and might be seen by the IRA as a good day for a repeat performance. But we have seen no specific evidence for this, other than material about a possible ASU here you have seen in the past.

An IRA "source" suggested to journalists today that the chances of a new ceasefire in the short-term were dim and denied that, despite the failures of recent attacks, the IRA were conducting a phoney war. There is no text of what the IRA are supposed to have said, but I attach an RTE interview which brings out the main points. The fact that the IRA spokesman explicitly supported Adams and McGuinness is not unhelpful.

There were no surprises in the meeting between Paddy Mayhew and Dick Spring on Thursday night. Spring raised the North and Bloody Sunday, without adding any new points or raising the temperature. On the talks, there was agreement that we are now in the business of managing a soft landing.

In the talks themselves, the initiative is with the independent Chairmen for the moment. They are conducting bilateral consultations with all the Parties on what

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should happen next. They are likely to conclude that adjourning the talks is the only option but, with luck, this may still take a couple more weeks.

On Bloody Sunday, I am pointing John Hume towards a meeting with Paddy Mayhew. Mo Mowlam apparently said during a visit to Northern Ireland today that she personally had no difficulty in offering an apology for Bloody Sunday. She presumably would not have said this without Blair's agreement. If Labour win the election, this statement could come back to haunt them.

Finally, there may be trouble on Saturday evening in a village called Harryville. The background in brief is that last September an Orange March to a Protestant church in the mainly Catholic village of Dunloy was prevented by the RUC, because outside Republican protestors turned up. Local Unionists/Loyalists then said that, if they could not march to their church in Dunloy, Catholics in the nearby, mainly Protestant village of Harryville should not be able to go to church freely either. They have been picketing the church ever since, accompanied by a variety of unpleasant incidents. They have now proposed, very provocatively, a parade of 22 bands past the Catholic church this Saturday evening, timed to coincide with the church service.

Mediation efforts are going on behind the scenes, but look unlikely to succeed. The RUC plan is not to stop the band parade altogether, but to ensure that it does not reach the church until after the worshippers have dispersed. The RUC do not expect big trouble, but it is obviously a very sensitive issue on both sides in present circumstances. Paisley has been stirring things up, but Trimble has played a moderate role so far.



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