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FAXED
To Jerni - Dever

FROM: QUENTIN THOMAS
Political Director
20 June 1997
QT/MR/113a

PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)-M cc **PS/Mr Ingram(L&B)-M**
PS/Mr Murphy(L&B)-M
PS/PUS(L&B)-M
PS/Sir David Fell-M
Mr Steele-M
Mr Ray-M
Mr Bell-M
Mr Leach-M
Mr Watkins-M
Mr Stephens-M
Mr Hill
Mr Brooker
Mr Perry-M
Mr Maccabe-M
Mr Beeton
Mr Lavery-M
Mr Whysall
Mr Warner
Mr Budd CabOffice-FAX
Mr Holmes No.10-FAX

LETTER FROM GERRY ADAMS

I circulated, with my earlier note, the letter from Gerry Adams to the Prime Minister which John Hume conveyed to me.

2. This note suggests how we might respond.
3. We have broken off, though not necessarily for all time, our direct exchanges with Sinn Féin following the IRA's murder of two policemen in Lurgan. It would accordingly be wrong to reply directly to Sinn Féin, and in any event I assume that, even if and when we do write to Sinn Féin again, it will be at official level.

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4. However we need to make some response. The letter has been conveyed to us by John Hume and part of our objective, if we cannot secure a ceasefire, is to end up with Hume, the Irish Government and the US Government agreeing that we have taken all appropriate steps.
5. This suggests that the best response might be for the Prime Minister to reply to Hume alluding to the letter he passed on but only indirectly.
6. As to the substance of the reply, I suggest that we say in essence that we believe we have given all the clarification which is necessary or appropriate. It is helpful that Sinn Féin have pushed their luck and ask for a great deal of detailed and substantive elucidation which is plainly inappropriate. Even Hume, in speaking to me, agreed that this went too far and said that he had told them that this amounts to an attempt to pre-negotiate substantive issues.
7. I attach a draft reply on the lines suggested above.
8. I spoke to David Cooney in the DFA. I told him of the terms of Adams' letter and of the approach I envisaged. He agreed that Adams' letter involves issues which will be addressed in the substantive negotiations. He speculated that Sinn Féin are manoeuvring so that they can claim that HMG has failed to answer their questions.
9. David Cooney consulted Sean O hUiginn (who is on the road) and his advice is that:
- we should not rush to respond
 - we should alert Hume to our approach in advance (I gave him my general response when he first phoned) and

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- that we should give positive response to any point which deserved it. (I am not sure that any point does.)

10. I doubt myself if delaying a response will serve much purpose.

(Signed: Quentin Thomas)

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