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MFTJ



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cc AC
PB (OR)
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PNC

From the Principal Private Secretary

2 September 1997

Dee Ken.

DEALINGS WITH THE UNIONISTS

Thank you for your two letters of 29 August, about follow up to the Prime Minister's meeting with Trimble.

The Prime Minister agrees with the proposed course you are following, in particular Paul Murphy's intention to go through the draft letter to Trimble with him in advance, and generally do everything possible to take Unionist concerns seriously, and appear to do so. It is vital to bend over backwards now to keep the UUP in the process.

On Loyalist prisoners, the Prime Minister regrets that it does not seem possible to release the two sick prisoners, but believes it is imperative to find something which can be done for the PUP.

On RUC reform, the Prime Minister agrees with Dr. Mowlam that we should look again at the possibility of proceeding by legislation, and hopes that the Business Managers will look sympathetically at this, despite all the difficulties. He also agrees that publication of a draft early in the autumn would be a useful step in any case.

I am copying this to John Grant (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Ken Sutton (Home Office), Paul Cohen (President of the Council's Office), Jane Hope (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office) and Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

Yours as
John

JOHN HOLMES

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