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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

FAXED

*to Stormont on
Secure Brief 12/9
06.45 NS*

From the Principal Private Secretary

11 September 1997

Dear Richard,

DRAFT ARTICLE FOR THE BELFAST NEWSLETTER

As you know, the Prime Minister has agreed to put an article in the Belfast Newsletter on Saturday, as part of the process of reassuring the Unionists. I attach a first draft of this for your comments as soon as possible. I have drawn on existing NIO drafts, but the result is so far uncleared either with the Prime Minister or with anyone else.

As I have mentioned in a previous letter, Paddy Teahon has shown great nervousness about what might be said in the article, particularly about the commitment to the Union, in the light of the divisions in republican ranks. I have said that I understand the Irish sensitivity, and that in any case we will not be saying any more than was said in the Prime Minister's Belfast speech on 16 May. Unfortunately, Teahon does not find this reassuring! He is keen to know what is in the article before it appears. We will have to address this when we are further on with the text.

I understand that the Newsletter's deadline is mid-afternoon tomorrow at the latest, but I wonder whether we might not extend this a little further if we have to, given that they will be getting an article from the Prime Minister.

I am copying this letter to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

JOHN HOLMES

Richard Lemon Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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