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From the Private Secretary

20 July 1997

Dear Mr Teahon

DECOMMISSIONING

The Prime Minister promised he would send some possible forms of words for the two governments to use, in addition to a clearer commitment than hitherto to the availability of a decommissioning scheme or schemes by 15 September.

The kind of formulation discussed at the IGC on Friday was as follows:

"Without some actual decommissioning during the negotiations alongside political progress, the two governments cannot see the necessary trust and confidence being built for a successful and agreed outcome to the negotiations."

Other possible formulations would be:

- The two governments want to see actual decommissioning from paramilitaries on both sides begin as soon as possible and clearly envisage this happening during the negotiations, on the basis of the Mitchell Report.
- The two governments' efforts will be directed towards actual decommissioning beginning during the negotiations, as envisaged by the Mitchell Report. They recognise that this depends on the cooperation of the paramilitary organisations themselves but believe that actions of this kind will be an essential part of the confidence-building needed to make a success of the negotiations.
- The governments are keen to see actual decommissioning begin as soon as possible, as part of the implementation both of the Mitchell principles and the proposals of the Mitchell Report. That will be their aim, to ensure

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confidence can be built during the negotiations, to give the best chance of success.

Obviously there are very many variations on this kind of theme, but we believe that the two governments saying something on these lines in the talks on Wednesday, no doubt accompanied by other words about the need to take the opportunity for lasting peace now presented, is the minimum required to enable the UUP to vote for the two governments' proposals. We do not believe that any of the formulations above would be inconsistent with what has been said publicly or to any of the parties hitherto.

Perhaps we can be in touch when you have had a chance to look at these suggestions.

Yours ,

Helena Hopkins

PP

JOHN HOLMES

Mr Paddy Teahon