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From the Private Secretary

21 July 1997

Dee John.

DECOMMISSIONING: DRAFT LANGUAGE

I sent you earlier today a copy of the Taoiseach's letter to the Prime Minister, which enclosed draft language in response to the language we sent them on Sunday. As you know, we then sent the Irish some further revised language both on decommissioning and on the consent principle. I now attach a still further fax from the Taoiseach's office with revised proposals, together with the gloss that this is as far as the Taoiseach is prepared to go on decommissioning.

The Prime Minister does not regard the Irish language as satisfactory on either count. He intends to press the Taoiseach both on the use of the word 'actual' in front of decommissioning, and on the consent principle as a key priority for the negotiations. He would have spoken to the Taoiseach this evening, but the Taoiseach was not available (probably deliberately).

I have made clear to Wally Kirwan that the Prime Minister will go on pressing for the word 'actual' to be used. He said in return that the Irish were having doubts themselves about the use of the word "real" before progress in the fourth sentence on the passage on decommissioning. They felt they were being pushed further than they wanted to go in circumstances where it was not clear that Trimble could be satisfied in any case.

Watch this space.

I am copying this to William Ehrman (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office), Sir John Kerr (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

*Yours
ac*
John

JOHN HOLMES

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