

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

19 December 1997

Dear Ken,

IRISH PRISONERS

The Prime Minister was grateful for the Home Secretary's minute of 12 December and the attached paper by officials. The Prime Minister is conscious that this is an extremely difficult and sensitive area, and believes that we need to be very cautious about what we say publicly and when. He would like to discuss this with the Home Secretary and Dr Mowlam early in January, if at all possible, and then more widely in IN committee at a suitably early moment. Meanwhile, he is content for officials to continue working up the idea of a possible scheme along the lines of that set out in the officials' paper.

I am copying this letter to Ken Lindsay (Northern Ireland Office) and Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

*Yours
John*

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Sutton Esq
Home Office

CONFIDENTIAL