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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

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From the Principal Private Secretary

30 December 1997

Dear Ken,

**PRISONERS: TAM DALYELL**

For the record, Tam Dalyell, M.P., rang just before Christmas to express his outrage, and that of his constituents, that paramilitary prisoners were having 10 days out of prison, while the two Scots guardsmen, Wright and Fisher, were not allowed out. This seemed to reflect a warped sense of values.

I spoke to Dalyell on 29 December, having checked the position with you, and explained that 10 years already spent in prison was the minimum qualifying period. Dalyell was courteous but not mollified. He did not disagree with the policy of letting paramilitary prisoners see their families, and had indeed defended this against a lot of opposition, including in his own constituency. But the treatment of the two soldiers was incomprehensible, and my explanation did not help, although he was grateful for it.

I do not think further action is necessary, but Dr. Mowlam and Mr. Ingram may like to be aware of the exchange.

Yours sincerely,

PP JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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