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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

WHITEHALL

LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Roderic Lyne Esq CMG  
 Private Secretary to the  
 Prime Minister  
 10 Downing Street  
 LONDON SW1

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20 OCT 1994 1615

**MUFAX ROOM****STORMONT HOUSE ANNEX**

Dear Rod,

cc: PS/SJS (L+B) 2+3 of 16-M  
 PS/PUS (L+B) 4+5 of 16-M  
 PS/Mr Fell 6 of 16-M  
 Mr Steele 7 of 16-M  
 Mr Watkins 8 of 16-M  
 Mr Bell 9 of 16-M  
 Mr Maxwell 10 of 16-M  
 Mr Perry 11 of 16-M  
 Mr Wood (L+B) 12+13 of 16-M  
 Mr Maccabe 14 of 16-M  
 Mr Boston 15 of 16-M  
 Miss Steele 16 of 16-M

20 October 1994

VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO NORTHERN IRELAND - 21/22  
 OCTOBER

Outline

The programme includes visits to Belfast City Centre, Lisburn, Newry, Dungannon, and an overnight stay at Hillsborough Castle. There will be no formal meetings with political parties, but meetings with community representatives as well as with Archbishop Eames and the Security Chiefs are planned.

The key note of the visit will be struck by the speech which the Prime Minister will be delivering at a lunch for the Institute of Directors at the Europa Hotel in Belfast about which we are also in separate correspondence. (The Hotel itself - allegedly the most bombed hotel in Europe - has been extensively refurbished. A symbol of NI's confidence in the future?)

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### Objectives of the Visit

NI reviewed the situation this morning. Against that background, the primary objective of the Prime Minister's visit (and of his speech in particular) will be to:

- announce that the Government can now sensibly make the assumption that the IRA truly intend to end violence for good; and
- complement this announcement by a balanced set of confidence building measures addressed to both sides of the community.

The details are set out in the speech.

Further background is provided in my Secretary of State's Memorandum for NI. Supplementary bull points and Q&A briefing will follow (which can also be drawn on by Government Ministers more widely and by posts abroad). The detailed programme with personality notes etc is also attached. (Fortunately the main engagements fall after the Speech. But the Prime Minister may opt for frankness with Archbishop Eames and Cardinal Daly shortly before he leaves for the Europa.)

### Handling

It will be important at all times to strike a balance between nationalist aspirations and unionist concerns, and to:

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- continue to reassure unionists of HMG's good faith ("no secret deals") and their continuing to uphold, with warmth, the democratic wish of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland to remain part of the Union;
- demonstrate to nationalists, of all persuasions, that HMG is prepared to respond positively to the PIRA announcement with sensible measures based on a working assumption that it is for good;
- reassure all moderate members of the community that the extremists will not be allowed to call the shots. (NI's future is for the people of Northern Ireland to decide);
- set out his strategic vision of the way forward both in terms of consolidating peace and making progress to a comprehensive political settlement.

More generally, the Prime Minister is well placed to take credit (while avoiding triumphalism) for the vindication which the PIRA, and now the Loyalist ceasefires, represent for the consistency, coherence and firmness of both security and political policies (including above all what he has sought to do, with the support of Mr Reynolds, in the Downing Street Declaration). It is a victory for the democratic process over terrorism.

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It will also be a further opportunity to ensure that it is the British government which is, and is seen to be - despite rival claimants - giving dynamic direction both to the peace process and to political development within the province; and, once again, to enlist the support of political leaders, opinion formers and ordinary people to his vision of the next steps (the DUP and SDLP need particular consideration).

Above all, perhaps, in winning the confidence of a deeply conservative society in which church, family values and community are living realities, the Prime Minister may want to:

- display again his deep, personal understanding of what all the people of Northern Ireland have endured over the last quarter century; and
- help NI to escape from its past by focussing on what a peaceful future has to offer. This goes beyond economic recovery and imaginative social and economic policies (important though they are). It means the healing of wounds; a better future for the children of Northern Ireland; and
- promises his personal, and the Governments', support to the people of Northern Ireland in the difficult period of adjustment ahead.

*Martin Howard*

MARTIN HOWARD  
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