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Line

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

8 April 1993

Dear William,

NORTHERN IRELAND: NEXT STEPS

As I told you on the telephone earlier today, the Prime Minister would like to take the opportunity of the NI committee meeting on 15 April to discuss the political prospects for Northern Ireland. This would be done when the committee has finished the first item on its agenda - force levels. We agreed that you would circulate a short letter on 14 April to help to guide the discussion; and that your Secretary of State would introduce the item.

Points which the Prime Minister would like to cover include:

- i. How can we prepare the ground so that the political dialogue can resume as quickly as possible after the May local elections?
- ii. If and when the talks resume, should HMG follow a more dirigiste approach by putting forward its own proposals? If so, what sort of proposals?
- iii. The Prime Minister is likely to meet Mr James Molyneaux soon, at his own request. Should he consider holding another meeting with all four party leaders together, as he did last year? When might this card best be played?
- iv. What further action can be taken to provide reassurance to the Protestant community? (You may wish to circulate a copy of the paper on "Protestant Alienation" which the Prime Minister read with great interest.

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- v. What further action, in addition to regular meetings through the Inter-governmental Conference, should be taken with the Government of the Republic of Ireland? Should the Prime Minister send a written message to his Irish counterpart? Would it be useful to arrange, at an appropriate time, a meeting between the Prime Minister, Northern Ireland Secretary and Foreign Secretary, on the one hand; and the Irish Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice on the other?

This list is not intended to be exclusive; but there will not be time for a very long discussion.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of NI committee, and to Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

*yours etc,
Roderic*

RODERIC LYNE

William Fittall Esq
Northern Ireland Office.