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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

16 December 1993

*Dear Jonathan,*

### JOINT DECLARATION: IRA RESPONSE

I am sure that you will already have contingency work in hand to deal with the range of likely responses by the Provisionals to the Joint Declaration. It would be very helpful if you could send me whatever you have for the Prime Minister's weekend box (i.e. by 1800 tomorrow, 17 December) so that we have a basis from which to work if we have to move quickly over the weekend. I appreciate that the definitive word from the Provisionals is likely to come later rather than sooner, and could well be timed to coincide with (and disturb!) the Christmas holiday. But in that eventuality too it will be useful to have done whatever we can to prepare ourselves.

In particular, could we have draft lines to be taken publicly by the Government in reply to three contingencies: straight acceptance by the IRA of the JD and an announcement of an immediate cessation of violence; straight rejection, asserting some justification (nothing new in the Joint Declaration? unacceptable that the IRA should be asked to lay down their arms until the British army stop attacking them? Select Committee prejudicial to genuine self-determination?); and qualified acceptance.

The latter is the most difficult, and perhaps the most likely, contingency. You can presumably assess the sort of conditions which the Provisionals would be likely to attach. Our response would need to retain the initiative which we hold at present. We have made clear that the substance of the Joint Declaration is not negotiable, and the Prime Minister would not wish to depart from that line. I think that he would want to play the ball back to the Provisionals in a way which still left it open for the Provisionals, on further reflection, to take up the offer; which did not strike the Irish Government or SDLP as too hard-nosed; but which equally did not allow the DUP to argue that we were

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softening our position. A small task for the wisdom of Solomon!

Aside from the three public lines, it would be helpful to have some form of checklist of actions to be taken in each of the three circumstances.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

December 15, 1993

*Yours ever,*

*Roderic*

**RODERIC LYNE**

*Yours sincerely,*

*John Chilton*

Jonathan Stephens Esq  
Northern Ireland Office

The Right Honourable John Major  
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