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7th July 1970

My dear Prime Minister

Thank you for your message of the 25th June, which was conveyed to me by your Ambassador. I am glad to learn that you are in favour of continuing contact and discussions of the Dr. Hillery/Mr. Thomson kind. Indeed, I feel that this kind of dialogue is essential in present circumstances if we are to minimise the risk of misunderstandings on matters of such vital interest to both our Governments.

I am also glad to note your Government's full commitment to the reform programme in the North. The implementation of the necessary reforms is essential to the peace and progress that we all desire, and they need to be pressed ahead without delay.

I am concerned about the Orange parades and demonstrations planned for the 13th July. These parades, when deliberately routed through sensitive areas of the North, are clearly provocative and do not fall into any reasonable definition of the exercise of normal civil rights. For this reason, and particularly because of the present tension in the area, I would appeal to you to exercise every

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influence at your command to have these parades cancelled. I fear that a continuance this year of such provocations may result in violence, which we would both abhor.

I am also perturbed by the action taken in the Lower Falls Road area in Belfast last week-end and the effect this has had on public opinion. This area was the victim last August of armed mobs, who burned out several hundred houses and killed several people. Since then, the area has not been the scene of any significant violence or disturbance. You will know that my Government is totally opposed to any arming of civilians but, in our view, arms searches must not only be complete and impartial but must be seen to be so if they are not to be regarded as further repression of the minority.

Please be assured, Mr. Prime Minister, of my constant desire to work for peace and harmony in this island and for greater understanding between our two Governments.

*Yours sincerely
John Lynch*

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