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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
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Permanent Under Secretary

Mr P J Woodfield CB CBE

F E R Butler Esq  
Principal Private Secretary  
No 10 Downing Street

20 December 1982

*Dear Helen,*

OPERATION PISTON

1. As promised in my note to you of 17 December, I now attach a background note on the security situation together with a list of wounded service personnel whom you can expect to see at Musgrave Park Hospital.
2. Philip Woodfield has already mentioned to John Coles over the telephone this afternoon that the list is somewhat shorter than we might have expected and that it might therefore give you cause to wonder whether a visit would still be worthwhile. Mr Woodfield pointed out to John Coles that the medical staff who attended the injured from Ballykelly will, of course, be there and he was inclined to think that the small number of casualties remaining should not deter you from a visit.
3. When you spoke to Mr Woodfield you asked him about communications during the visit. Secure telephone facilities will be available at Aldergrove, Bessbrook, Gough Barracks and HQNI Lisburn but not at Bangor, Newtownards or Musgrave Park Hospital Military Wing (although there are secure telephones in the Echelon Camp). While the party is in transit, either by helicopter or by car, contact can be maintained by radio although not on secure equipment. It seems safe to say therefore that

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you will be able to keep your lines of contact open and that if secure facilities are not immediately to hand they will not be far away.

4. Finally there is one tiny amendment to be made to the first entry to the non-flying alternative programme. For the sake of clarity, you might like to note that where at present it says '0830 - leave London' it should say '0830 - leave Northolt'.

Yours sincerely,  
David Brooker

DAVID BROOKER  
Private Secretary

Encls

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