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cc: PB  
Press.FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE  
21 JANUARY 1996

cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B  
 PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B  
 PS/PUS (L&B) - B  
 PS/Sir David Fell - B  
 Mr Steele - B  
 Mr Thomas (L&B) - B  
 Mr Stephens - B  
 Mr Ray - B  
 Mr Leach - B  
 Mr Bell - B  
 Mr Maccabe - B  
 Mr Hill (L&B) - B  
 Mr Beeton - B  
 Mr Holmes, No 10 - M

Mr Brooker, IPL - B

**HUME/ADAMS FRESH TEXT - MEETING**

Thank you very much for the briefing supplied in your submission of 15 January for the Secretary of State's meeting with Mr Hume to discuss the text he gave to PUS last week. The meeting took place yesterday. Michael Ancram and PUS were also present.

2. The Secretary of State pointed to the increasing IRA violence since Canary Wharf and his belief that, sooner or later, one of the devices would connect and fatalities would occur. To him, the more the violence continued, the more difficult it was to see any ceasefire coming about. The 28 November statement by the Prime Minister had set out the process by which Sinn Fein could come into the Talks, but it was not just a question of words, but also actions. It would not be possible to go back to the 10 October statement, however there should be no doubt that the Government wanted to see an inclusive process with Sinn Fein in it, as soon as it could be verified that any ceasefire was dependable.

3. Mr Hume rehearsed many of the arguments we have heard before. A lot of young people had been sucked into the conflict in the early 1970s and these people now did not want their children to go through

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the same experience. He was concerned that the present leadership of the Republican movement would be over-thrown and replaced by a younger element who wanted to intensify the violence. The present leadership wanted to get out of the conflict with dignity and clearly would not agree to any period like 18 months for entry into the Talks. If something on the lines he had proposed was said by the Prime Minister then Adams would give a guarantee in advance that the ceasefire would follow. He (Hume) would write a letter saying that he would personally take responsibility if any ceasefire broke down.

4. Hume said he had asked Adams to ask the IRA to 'chuck it' and would if necessary put that direct to the IRA himself. On the question of a tactical ceasefire, Mr Hume said that he would prefer to have a six months tactical ceasefire than six months of tactical violence. The Secretary of State responded that, in those circumstances, we could not say it was an unequivocal ceasefire if it was known that it was purely tactical.

5. As to why the IRA were continuing their violence, Mr Hume said this was all they had known during their lives; getting them to stop was a process as well. However, he could see a change in their attitudes - they were no longer speaking specifically of a united Ireland or a date for British withdrawal; rather they were talking in terms of a negotiated settlement and confidence building measures, including an end to punishment beatings and other paramilitary activities, including surveillance and targetting.

6. Michael Ancram made the point that the SDLP document on decommissioning stated that every atrocity widened the credibility gap for Sinn Fein/IRA. He suggested they should call the Government's bluff and declare a ceasefire. Mr Hume said that he had put that to Adams but there were real problems, not least the deep divisions in Northern Ireland, suspicions, the Unionist siege mentality, the Republicans letting Unionists off the hook by using violence. If there was a totally unarmed strategy then there had to be political activity. Could we suggest any other method of stopping the violence? Nowhere else in the world did people have to prove they were serious before getting into Talks.

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7. Reinforcing his plea, Mr Hume said that this was a historic opportunity and it would be disastrous for Northern Ireland if a younger generation got sucked into violence. The Loyalists, on the other hand, were talking to the SDLP all the time. Their prisoners, too, had a new view on the situation which recognised that if the IRA moved to totally unarmed strategy then some activity with Sinn Fein had to be going on at the same time. The Secretary of State said the elections had been the way of getting inclusive Talks going. But clearly Sinn Fein/IRA had excluded themselves. The position was not hopeless and, while some Unionists probably didn't want them in the Talks, the process was actually there for Sinn Fein, beginning with an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire and graduating along the path set out on 28 November.

8. PUS raised the possibility of alternative avenues. One was a statement by a third party which might enable both Sinn Fein and HMG to respond - perhaps Sinn Fein saying in terms that they would be prepared to enter the Talks on conditions laid down by HMG. Alternatively, Adams could make a statement or pose a question in terms of how long any delay might be before an entitlement to get into Talks, as a delay of 18 months was too long. Hume said that if the Government could say that Sinn Fein would be entering the Talks as soon as possible (or something similar) after a ceasefire then he felt there was something in this. He was quite prepared (tonight) to put the idea to Adams first, before trying any language on him. Michael Ancram cautioned that our experience of the last ceasefire was of Sinn Fein saying one thing and the IRA doing the opposite, such as test firing mortars and targetting.

9. The Secretary of State, concluding the meeting, said that there was no wish on the part of the Government to postpone entry of Sinn Fein, particularly in the light of recent terrorist incidents, but there had to be a clear statement that the violence had stopped

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and for good. That being the case, there could be meetings in a process of bilaterals and other contacts with Sinn Fein. Mr Hume said he would come back when he had made further enquiries.

(Signed)

W K Lindsay  
PS/Secretary of State

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