

Taoiseach,

22

Draft for your consideration

S.D.

c.c. Attorney General  
Paddy Teahon

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SECRET

1. The Taoiseach met John Hume for about 25 minutes at Government Buildings on 1 November, 1996.
2. Hume summarised the current position about the ceasefire as follows. He had met Adams last week and had subsequently, on 29 October, privately met with the British Prime Minister. Adams had authorised him to say that if the British issued the 10 October draft statement, the IRA would immediately respond by announcing the unequivocal restoration of the 1994 August ceasefire. The wording of the announcement would draw on the 28 February, 1996 joint communiqué issued following the Taoiseach's meeting with the Prime Minister. Since

this communiqué came after the Canary Wharf bomb, Hume felt that it would be reasonable for the IRA to rely on it.

3. The Prime Minister had responded by explaining that he had a range of difficulties and was consulting widely - Hume felt too widely. The Westminster situation was particularly difficult.. Many of the same people likely to oppose a renewal of the ceasefire were Eurosceptics. The Prime Minister said that he needed a signal from the IRA that this time a renewed ceasefire would be really serious. He did not know what such a signal might constitute and asked Hume if he had any ideas.
4. Hume responded by saying that, this time, he was personally convinced and hopeful. He knew the IRA. He lived among them. He understood their mentality. People like Adams and McGuinness got sucked in as young people and they had been reared on the traditional Republican diet, including violence. They had lived with the consequences for the last twenty five years. They were now fathers themselves and did not want to sentence their children to the same fate. They saw sense in what the SDLP was saying and realised this was their last serious opportunity for an agreement and for peace.



5. The Prime Minister was concerned that if Sinn Féin were immediately admitted to the Belfast Talks following a ceasefire announcement, the unionists would exit. Hume said that obviously this could not be excluded. In those circumstances, the two Government might have to take the lead.
6. The Prime Minister had asked about the timetable and if Sinn Féin expected to enter the Talks immediately. Hume replied that he and Adams were working on the basis of the conditions set out in the joint communiqué of 28 February. An unequivocal restoration of the cessation of violence should be sufficient.
7. The Prime Minister had asked Hume about the IRA's attitude to decommissioning. Hume had replied that they were committed to it on the basis of the Mitchell Report. Once the ceasefire announcement was made, Sinn Féin would formally make clear their commitment to the Mitchell principles. There would be no delay.
8. Hume said that he had drafted the statement which the IRA would make to announce the new ceasefire. He had given it to Adams. As soon as

the Prime Minister made his statement or published the article, the IRA would make their statement in which they would say that they were immediately and unequivocally restoring the ceasefire. It would go on to say that it was now the clear intention of the IRA to end the armed struggle in Ireland for ever. It would also say that it was their clear intention that the Talks process into which they were entering would lead to agreement on new political arrangements.

11. The Taoiseach asked if there was any possibility that the IRA's ceasefire
9. Hume said that the next step was that Adams would come back to him, hopefully with approval for the draft ceasefire statement. Hume would then go to Major, possibly as early as next Monday or Tuesday (4/5 November). Meanwhile, it was vital that absolutely nothing got into the public domain. Adams was working with a team and severe difficulties would be created for him if there was any public reference to what was going on.

12. Hume then said that he had been questioned by a radio reporter earlier in
10. The Taoiseach said that his position and that of the Irish Government was that there should be no delay between the resumption of the ceasefire and the entry of Sinn Féin into talks. It was not certain, however, that this was Prime Minister Major's position. In a telephone



conversation with him last weekend, he seemed to contemplate a delay period. In addition to the February joint communiqué, paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Ground Rules, agreed in April, were relevant. But the Taoiseach said that what Hume had proposed to Adams might cover everything. A ceasefire would meet paragraph 9 and the content of the statement would seem to meet the requirements of paragraph 8.

11. The Taoiseach asked if there was any possibility that the IRA's ceasefire statement could say something about the principle of consent. Hume said that Adams had already in effect agreed that point. The draft ceasefire statement drew heavily on two paragraphs from the Joint Framework Document. While he did not have the exact words, they included the phrase "a negotiated settlement based on the agreement of all sections".
12. Hume then said that he had been questioned by a radio reporter earlier in the day about differences in approach between the Taoiseach and Tánaiste about the possible reaction to a renewal of the IRA ceasefire. In all his replies, he had said he detected no difference and that both seemed

to him to be committed to the terms of the joint communiqué of 28 February.

13. The Taoiseach said that there was in fact no difference between himself and the Tánaiste. In his remarks in the Dáil and elsewhere, he had been at pains not say anything which would allow a public difference to emerge between Dublin and London. Any such difference would be particularly counter-productive at the moment in that the Prime Minister would probably find it attractive to be able to say that he had stood up to the Irish. The British in fact had a different position on the time gap between a ceasefire declaration and Sinn Féin's admission to talks but it was very important not to advertise the difference. It was for this reason that the Taoiseach said he referred at all times to paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Rules of Procedure.
14. The Taoiseach asked Hume if it would be helpful for him (the Taoiseach) to talk again to Prime Minister Major over the weekend. It was something that in any event he might be doing. Hume replied that he thought it would be better to wait until he knew Adams' response to the proposed ceasefire statement and he said he would be in touch



immediately he heard from Adams. The Taoiseach asked again about the British position on a three-month gap between the ceasefire and Talks. Hume said that no such gap had been mentioned to him.

15. The Taoiseach asked what would happen if the unionists left the Talks as soon as Sinn Féin were admitted. Hume replied that if for whatever reasons the parties were unable to talk together in the same room, the two Governments could conduct negotiations by talking separately to the parties. Any agreement arrived at would then be put to the people in a referendum.
16. The Taoiseach asked about a scenario in which Sinn Féin were admitted to the Talks, made clear their commitment to the Mitchell principles and the Talks would then be adjourned to enable parties to reflect. Hume agreed that this might provide a good way out. Obviously, there could be an important role for Senator Mitchell who could for example suspend plenary for at least a month following Sinn Féin's declaration of support for the Mitchell principles. He could say that he then needed to go through a process of bilateral consultation with each of the parties to enable an agenda to be finalised.

17. The Taoiseach asked if Adams was in control and could deliver the Republican Movement. Hume replied that he simply did not know. He was acting on the assumption that Adams could deliver.
18. The meeting concluded with brief references to recent IRA and other activity in the Donegal (Malin Head) area.



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Seán Donlon

2 November, 1996.