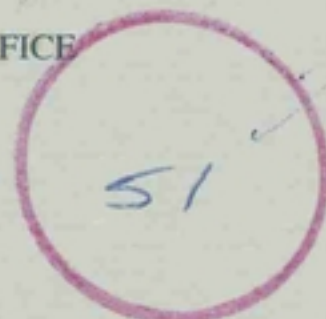


From : THE **S E C R E T** PRIVATE SECRETARY

CCPB  
JH



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17 January 1997

*Dear John*

**HUME/ADAMS - FRESH TEXT**

John Hume has given to Sir John Chilcot a revision of a proposed statement agreed with Adams and based on the 10 October text. According to Hume, if delivered by HMG, this would lead to the announcement of an IRA ceasefire. A copy is attached at Annex A.

As usual, Hume is setting his sights high, and from his conversation with PUS he is hoping for a positive reaction from the Government to help both him and his party, give leverage to the Republican leadership to limit IRA violence, and keep alive a strong sense that the circumstances for a new ceasefire can still be constructed. This latest initiative can be seen as a genuine attempt to develop the 10 October text in a way which brings it closer to the Government's position; on any objective assessment, however, it falls well short of what is now the Government's declared position as set out in the 28 November statement by the Prime Minister.

While it is to some extent reassuring that Sinn Fein continue to show interest in developing an agreed text it may be a measure of their true commitment that they have reverted to the old history of the 10 October text, rather than the 28 November statement which is the Government's formal, declared position. They are trying to wind

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the clock back, which simply will not work. (There is reason to believe that the Irish have also dismissed this notion of building on the 10 October text, although for the ill-founded reason that the British Government is not interested in seeing Sinn Fein joining the talks before the General Election).

Attached at Annex B is a short note analysing the textual differences between the Government's statement of 28 November and this new text from Mr Hume. The key difference is that the Hume text knocks out the various steps which the Government has declared as necessary between the point when a ceasefire is announced and Sinn Fein can join their first plenary (pages 2 and 3 of the 28 November statement). These steps are intended to provide "sufficient time" to ensure that Sinn Fein meet the requirements of the statutory Ground Rules before they are admitted.

By comparison, Amendment 2 in the Hume paper envisages Sinn Fein moving direct to a plenary as soon as they have committed themselves to peaceful methods and a ceasefire has been declared. They want to dispense with all the intermediate steps set out by the Government. This reflects an Irish Government suggestion at an earlier stage. Realistically, it is a non-starter as it is so far at odds with the British Government's stated position.

The Secretary of State has agreed to meet Mr Hume to discuss this latest text early next week.

*Yours ever*  
*David M*  
*for* W K LINDSAY

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