



FAXED

1330 27/9

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

27 September 1996

Dee Paddy,

... I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has just sent to John Hume, covering a text setting out our approach to the multi-party negotiations. We would aim to publish this text early next week, probably in the form of a press article under the name of the Prime Minister. I have made clear to John Hume, in sending him the text, that the terms of it are not up for negotiation. It represents what we propose to say, no more no less.

It would be helpful if, in any contacts you have with those concerned, you could underline that this is a reasonable statement of British policy and that more cannot be expected. It is now for John Hume and those to whom he has been talking to deliver on what they said.

Yours ever
John
JOHN HOLMES

Mr Paddy Teahon

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THE PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for your letter of 8 August and the text which you faxed on 6 September.

The IRA's position, as you describe it, is that if we were ready to make this statement, and the IRA knew when we were going to make it, they would respond shortly afterwards, at a time specified in advance, with an unequivocal restoration of the August 1994 "total cessation".

When I wrote to you on 24 July, I said that the IRA should restore their ceasefire without any further prevarication. But, in response to the suggestion that reassurances from the British Government on certain issues in line with its established public policy would help to bring this about, I set out words which could be used.

Now they have returned with one significant issue - the timeframe - which is simply not under our control, and an altogether longer text covering a host of other issues. Meanwhile, continued preparation for further IRA attacks goes on, as the arrests and arms finds on Monday demonstrate all too clearly. Intimidation and so-called punishment attacks also continue to increase in

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number and brutality. As I have already said publicly, Sinn Fein's talk of peace can have little credibility against this background.

It remains the case that the IRA should restore their ceasefire without further ado and without the need for further statements. The Government is certainly not in the business of negotiating a restoration of the IRA ceasefire, nor in giving secret assurances to bring it about. Sinn Fein must understand that we mean in private what we say in public.

Nevertheless, if there is genuine doubt or uncertainty over the Government's policy, I am happy to look at that. Because I am in no doubt of the benefits, for the people of Northern Ireland and the negotiations, of a genuine and unequivocal restoration of the IRA ceasefire, we will repeat and reaffirm our approach on the key issues. The attached text has been prepared for this purpose, and will be published in the near future.

Yours Truly
John H.

John Hume, Esq., M.P.

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