

CONFIDENTIAL**FAXED**to Wton via comcen.
and Nio. 2/4 at 15.30

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

2 April 1997

Dear Anthony,

HUME\ADAMS EXCHANGES

Michael Ancram briefed the Americans on where these exchanges stood during his recent visit to Washington, and gave them a copy of our answers to the questions put to us by John Hume. I now enclose a copy of a subsequent letter from Gerry Adams to John Hume, of which John Hume gave us a copy a few days before Easter, and which suggests revised answers. Michael Ancram subsequently met John Hume to explain that we had already given our answers, and were not in the business of negotiating them with Sinn Fein, and to set out why the proposed revisions did not in any case accurately represent our policy. Michael Ancram then wrote to John Hume to make sure there was no misunderstanding about this. I enclose a copy of this letter too. The exchange rests there for the moment.

I suggest you give copies of both these to the NSC to bring them up to date. They may ask at the same time about recent speculation about a new IRA ceasefire. You may like to touch base with me or the NIO about exactly where things stand on that front before you speak to them. But the basic position is that, as you may have seen, there is evidence to suggest both that a new ceasefire/suspension may be imminent and the opposite. Public comments also point in both directions simultaneously. In the absence of definitive evidence one way or the other, we can only wait and see. Meanwhile our own position has not changed, although Mo Mowlam's weekend interview seems to have moved Labour Party policy on a little, not necessarily deliberately.

Yours ever
John

JOHN HOLMES

Anthony Cary Esq
Washington

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