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From the Private Secretary

20 June 1997

Dear Han,

### TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH JOHN HUME, 20 JUNE

The Prime Minister spoke to Hume on the telephone this morning, on his way to the airport to leave for Denver. He began by suggesting that Adams did not seem to have had much to offer when Hume had spoken to him last night.

Hume said that he expected a fax from Adams within the hour. Adams' reaction to our aide memoire had been positive, but he had also said he wanted some points clarified. Quentin Thomas's covering letter to the aide memoire had said that clarification could be given at a further meeting, which was obviously not happening. That was why they were writing again. Adams had made clear that once these issues were successfully clarified, he would take this to the IRA. He (Hume) thought there was a real chance of success. He had spoken very strongly to Adams to say that the requirements of the 10 October paper had been met, and that a complete end to the violence should now follow. Adams had spoken of the distrust factor, despite the positive nature of the paper, and the need to clear up a few matters.

The Prime Minister said it sounded as if Sinn Fein were stringing us along. What clarifications did they need? Hume said that he had raised the same question but they had said they would move very quickly once they had our reply. They were worried about decommissioning and "stuff like that" including confidence-building measures. Hume went on to complain that someone had told the *Irish Times* of his visit to No.10, although he had not come or gone through the front door.

The Prime Minister said this had not been us. He went on that he would be talking to Clinton about all this. He would be back on Tuesday and expected to make a statement on Northern Ireland thereafter, perhaps on Wednesday. If Sinn



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Fein were playing games, he would want Hume to support his position publicly. Hume said he hoped everything would be clear by Wednesday. As for support, the Prime Minister need not worry.

The Prime Minister said that he had been appalled by the Lurgan murders. What explanation did Sinn Fein have to offer? Hume said that their response was to say that, as long as there was not a ceasefire, there was not a ceasefire. And of course they were a secret organisation, which made things harder to control quickly. The Prime Minister said this made things very difficult with the Unionists. Hume said there were always such difficulties. Some of them did not want the violence to stop. The vital goal was to stop the violence, and we needed to keep on talking to achieve that. He was hearing this from all sides, notably the business community. He understood the Prime Minister's worries. But he hoped to hear good news from Adams. He would let Dr. Mowlam have a copy of the fax as soon as it appeared.

Comment

The Prime Minister was unconvinced by Hume's line, but thought it better not to have a serious row with him at this stage.

I am copying this letter to William Ehrman (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office), Sir John Kerr (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

*Yours are*  
*John*

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.