

CONFIDENTIAL

File in 19/6.

From: John Holmes
Date: 13 June 1997

PRIME MINISTER

NORTHERN IRELAND

We have now sent the text of the aide memoire, amended to reflect Irish and US comments, as you saw, to Sinn Fein. I have also sent the final version to the Irish and the Americans.

Irish officials are meeting Sinn Fein tomorrow, and should get some initial reaction to our paper then. Our officials should be meeting Sinn Fein early next week, but a time has not yet been fixed.

I suppose this is the way to do it

Thereafter, depending on reactions, we remain on track for your statement to the House on Thursday. I will try to work on a text of this in Amsterdam, if there is any time.

Meanwhile the NIO are putting together a handling strategy, to ensure that all the necessary bases are covered before your statement. They include:

- the Americans;
- the Irish;
- John Hume;
- David Trimble;
- John Major/Paddy Ashdown;
- Parliament;
- editors/journalists.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

You will need to do some of this yourself. In particular I think you will need to see Trimble and Hume, probably on Thursday morning. It would also make sense for you to see John Major, perhaps immediately after the European Council statement in the House on Wednesday afternoon. ✓

As we have discussed, this is all high risk. But we have the Irish and Americans fully on board, and I am sure you will have solid support from your own side in the House. Squaring John Major will also be important. For what it is worth, Mo's latest meeting with Trimble over dinner earlier this week was quite successful. He appeared to be in cooperative mood, and gave the impression that he was expecting some move from us on Sinn Fein and might not react too badly. This may prove over-optimistic. In any case we will have to work hard on him immediately before the statement. The Americans will do the same.


JOHN HOLMES

CONFIDENTIAL