

06-JUN-1997 16:50 FROM NIO LONDON

TO

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SECRET and PERSONAL

FROM: QUENTIN THOMAS
Political Director
6 June 1997
QT/MR/85

*JEH - separate copy
 already seen?*

10/6

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PS/SECRETARY OF STATE(L&B)-M

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cc PS/Mr Murphy(L&B)-M
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 Sir David Fell-M
 Mr Steele-M
 Mr Stephens
 Mr Brooker
 Mr Hill
 Mr Budd CabOffice-
 Mr Holmes No.10-
 Mr Ray Liaison-Fax

*cc
 Colin
 Budd*

PHONE CALL FROM JOHN HUME: PEACE PROSPECTS

As I told the Secretary of State at the time, in the margins of Castle Buildings last week I told Mr Hume that I had been disappointed by Sinn Féin's reaction at our last meeting. I told him that I put it to them that on three of the issues in my judgement we had given Sinn Féin orally a more specific, developed and advanced position than on 10 October. On the fourth issue, namely the date of entry, we had indicated that this Government, unlike its predecessor, was ready in principle to give a date if the other pieces seemed in place.

2. There is other evidence that this passage of the meeting with Sinn Féin, and this subsequent conversation with Mr Hume, has led to further reflections on the part of Sinn Féin.
3. Today Mr Hume phoned me, when I was with Sir John Chilcot, to say that he had been in touch with Sinn Féin and put to them what I had said. He had garbled it slightly. He said that he had put to them that I had said that we had given them, or were ready to give them, 10 October on three of the points and were ready to develop a further position on the fourth (which, Mr Hume said, was decommissioning).

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4. I corrected him. I said that what I had said to Sinn Féin, and I thought to him, was that in my view the positions on three issues we had put to Sinn Féin in the meetings amounted to a more developed specific and forward position than was represented by the 10 October text. On the fourth issue, which I explained was the date, not decommissioning, I had said that this Government was ready in principle, if the other pieces were falling in place, to offer a date. I repeated this until it was clear that Mr Hume had understood what I was saying. He asked me to leave it with him and said he would get back to Sinn Féin.

5. Within 15 minutes Mr Hume phoned again having spoken to "their intellectual Aiden" i.e Aiden McAteer. Mr McAteer had said that if HMG were to put to Sinn Féin on paper the three points (confidence building measures; timeframe; decommissioning) together with a "reasonable formula" for entry together with a date Sinn Féin would at once go to the IRA to seek a ceasefire. Mr Hume emphasised that Sinn Féin had stressed that they really want to stop.

6. Mr Hume urged us to put it to Sinn Féin and to meet them quickly. I said it would take a little time. I thanked him for this valuable information.

(Signed)

QUENTIN THOMAS
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