

Jun 1997 14:55

0171 210 6722
S OF S PRIVATE OFFICE 1712106722
FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

No. 5794 P. 1/4

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
11 MILLBANK
LONDON
SW1P 4QEcc FA/APS
BUPJohn Holmes Esq
PS/Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AAFile
JM 4/6.+ June
May 1997

Dear John

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR TRIMBLE AT 5.30 PM

Further to my earlier letter, my Secretary of State thought the Prime Minister might find it helpful to have a brief indication of the political mood following yesterday's resumption (followed by a week's adjournment to allow for stocktaking) of the Talks at Castle Buildings.

The mood among nationalists is largely unchanged. The SDLP remain keen to see progress in the Talks, but sceptical of Unionist intentions. The optimism amongst grass roots Nationalists regarding a restored ceasefire, created by the first meeting between Sinn Fein and officials, has now disappeared.

The Unionist mood continues to be nervous and suspicious, particularly concerning Sinn Fein. Optimistic press reports notwithstanding, the South African Conference seems not to have created any new mood of co-operation. Although some Unionist elements speak of possible Sinn Fein entry to Talks following a ceasefire, Mr Trimble is firmly and publicly opposed.

4. Jun. 1997 14:56

S OF S PRIVATE OFFICE 1712106722

No. 5794 P. 2/4



He is reported to be coming to his meeting with the PM determined to have official-level contacts with Sinn Fein - "this charade" - brought to an end, a call echoed by Mr McCartney (see this morning's Newsletter report, attached). In the Talks Plenary session yesterday and in media interviews he has claimed that the purpose of the meetings has been subverted by civil servants, who had exceeded their authority. He argues that the meetings are being used to negotiate an early entry to Talks for Sinn Fein, and that it would have taken only one hour to discharge the declared remit of explaining the Government's position.

Trimble may also mention the new SDLP Lord Mayor of Belfast, Alban Maguinness, who yesterday suggested that the Council, no longer Unionist controlled, would have to reconsider the flying of the Union flag and the proposing of the loyal toast at civic functions. This caused considerable anger among Unionists. Trimble may want to seek the Prime Minister's view (both issues are within the Council's power to determine).

Yours
David Kyle
KEN LINDSAY