

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

30 October 1996

Dear Sir,

HUME/ADAMS INITIATIVE

As I mentioned to Robert Crawford, Trimble rang me again this morning, to say that he had been a little concerned by what I had told him the previous evening. He hoped he could be brought into the loop before internal consultations were complete. I said that we would certainly be talking to him before anything was tabled anywhere.

Trimble went on to say that he had also been concerned by Press reports he had seen about arguments between us and the Irish over how many weeks and months Sinn Fein should wait before entering the talks. He hoped we were not in danger of missing the point. The key question was the criteria by which the genuineness of an IRA ceasefire would be judged, not some arbitrary time period after which Sinn Fein could be let in.

I said that we had been looking at how criteria, which we agreed were crucial, could be combined with time. Obviously some time would be needed to assess the genuineness of a ceasefire - we would need a period to look at how the IRA were matching up to the criteria. It might be useful to have some kind of minimum period in mind for this. Trimble was half reassured by this, but stressed again the importance of the criteria.

As I discussed with Robert, this may be useful in influencing how we present our ideas. It does not mean that we can simply move to a lesser time period than 3 months, on the grounds that Trimble regards any time period as irrelevant. But it does mean that we can lay greater stress on the criteria, and less on the exact time frame.

I am copying this letter to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
John
JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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