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FROM: R P LEMON  
PS/Michael Ancram  
23 October 1996

ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
SECURITY POLICY & OPERATIONS 1  
RECEIVED 23 OCT 1996  
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REF.  
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE (B)

402/606

cc PS/Michael Ancram (B&L) - B  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B  
PS/PUS (B&L) - B  
PS/Sir David Fell - B  
Mr Steele - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Ray - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Stephens - B  
Mr Beeton - B  
Mr Lavery - B  
Mr Hill - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Perry - B  
Miss Bharucha - B  
Ms Mapstone - B  
Mr Budd, Cab Office  
HMA Dublin  
Mr Lamont, RID - B

ai(A)

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B

HUME/ADAMS: POSSIBLE PHONE CALL WITH THE TAOISEACH

The Minister has seen Mr Stephen's note of 22 October attaching a draft letter to No 10 and has commented as follows:

"While I agree with the general approach, I am a little concerned about the tone of the note. Firstly, it does not deal with the very real possibility that Hume/Adams is part of the 'talk peace-wage war', IRA strategy of which we should be wary. Nor does it analyse the other side of the coin, namely that there will be no ceasefire so that all we are doing is positioning ourselves against that eventuality. In that context not responding to Hume at all would be the most difficult position to defend. Sean O'hUiginn's advice was that no response might still allow enough uncertainty for a ceasefire and is valid in that very limited context. It fails

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to meet the more likely PIRA scenario (see my meeting with Methodists) of an offer of ceasefire not responded to! My own interest is to tell the Irish that if they cannot support us we will plough on alone (hoping that the US and Lake will understand 3 months). We cannot afford to be wrong footed and our current position is reasonable and sustainable.

Spring today has left the door ajar [Belfast Telegraph 23 October, page 4, "New ceasefire ticket to talks, Sinn Fein told"]. PM could ask Bruton what this means. Taken with the Irish Independent story today it could be classic Dublin tactic of leak to provoke reactions from themselves to pre-empt British move. Or it could be that they too are thinking. Worth exploring anyway."

Signed

R P LEMON  
PS/Michael Ancram

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