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PS/PUS
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas L + B
Mr Steele
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Mr Bell
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Mr Watkins
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42006

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
SECURITY POLICY & OPERATIONS 1

RECEIVED 15 OCT 1996

REF 2576

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE (B)

John Hume rang me again this afternoon. He had already spoken to Edward O'Donnell over the weekend. He had a response to the latest text.

I explained again that we were looking for a text, but that I did not expect us to be in a position to respond until the end of the week, given the sensitivity of the issues and the need for a response to the latest text. He said that there was a real opportunity to make progress towards a settlement. He had no doubt of Adams' sincerity. He hoped we would not take too long.

I said that he had to recognise that the IRA's credibility and our confidence had been severely set back by the attack last Monday. In any case, some of the language raised a considerable difficulty. He should certainly not expect us to accept the text as it stood. He was disappointed by this, and suggested that we should discuss it more fully before.

From : JOHN HOLMES.
To : KEN LINDSAY.
Subject : HUME / ADAMS INITIATIVE.
Date : 14 OCTOBER 1996.

Lake has also now spoken to Adams. Lake told me that he had given him a lecture to start with to the effect that not only was the Loughrea attack wrong, it was also stupid and counterproductive. Lake felt a credibility in the US was eroding rapidly, and they had inevitably made a much harder for us and for the Irish Government to keep open the door for Sinn Féin. The Adams/Adams exchange was also much more difficult now.

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

to 2/54/96
18 Oct 1996
PRIVATE OFFICE

From the Private Secretary

14 October 1996

Dear Gen,

HUME/ADAMS INITIATIVE

John Hume rang me again this afternoon, having already spoken to Edward Oakden over the weekend. He was pressing for a response to the latest text.

I explained again that we were looking at the text, but that I did not expect us to be in a position to respond until the end of the week, given the sensitivity of the issues and the need for collective discussion. He said that there was a real opportunity to make progress towards a settlement. He had no doubt of Adams' sincerity. He hoped we would not take too long.

I said that he had to recognise that the IRA's credibility and our confidence had been severely set back by the attack last Monday. In any case, some of the language caused us considerable difficulty. He should certainly not expect us to accept the text as it stood. Hume seemed disappointed by this, and repeated that he had tried to find language which had been used before.

This was the third or fourth such exchange since Hume gave us the text on Thursday evening. I would not have recorded it now but for his subsequent call on Michael Ancram (Richard Lemon's minute of today). As you will see, the exchanges were very similar. You will also see that I was not unduly negative with him, in the circumstances. Indeed I was slightly concerned afterwards that his expectations might still be higher than the situation warranted. But he may now be getting the message through cumulative doses of cold water.

Lake has also now spoken to Adams. Lake told me that he had given him a lecture to start with to the effect that not only was the Lisburn attack wrong, it was also stupid and counterproductive. Sinn Fein's credibility in the US was shrinking rapidly, and they had inevitably made it much harder for us and for the Irish Government to keep open the door for Sinn Fein. The Hume/Adams exercise was also much more difficult now.

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Adams had been shaken by all this, according to Lake, and anxious that the US should remain engaged. He wanted to see real progress, particularly from the Hume/Adams exercise. He had talked of sending Lake a memo with some alternative form of words. I made strongly discouraging noises, but Lake said that he would at least want to look at it. I do not like the sound of this, although I am not at all surprised.

I am copying this to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office), Sir John Kerr (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

Yours ever

John

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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