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R. A. C. N. Cabal
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From: PS/Secretary of State (B)
16 October 1996

AMENDED VERSION

DESK IMMEDIATE

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B
PS/Michael Ancram (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 Leach - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Wood (B&L) - B
Mr Hill - B
Mr Beeton - B
Mrs Brown - B
Mr Cornick - B
Mr Maccabe - B
Ms Bharucha - B
Mr Whysall - B
Mr N Carson - B
Mr D Lavery - B

Mr Stephens - B

HUME/ADAMS INITIATIVE

John Holmes telephoned me this morning with the PM's comments on the proposed NI paper on Hume/Adams. John said that the Prime Minister remained sceptical about the Secretary of State's proposed approach but might be persuadable. The PM was particularly concerned that there should be more than one option presented in the paper. The PM would therefore like additional options identified. These should include an option of a reply to Hume saying that HMG could not continue with this initiative after the Lisburn bombing, in effect a polite brush-off letter. The second option could be a response to Hume which said that HMG could not take an initiative forward at present without further and better evidence of serious intent on the part of the IRA to declare a lasting ceasefire. This would emphasise the need to have something from Adams himself, (or the IRA), before a public statement was issued.

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2. John said that these options should be worked up as real options and possible draft letters should be provided to support them.
3. On the draft paper itself, John felt the first paragraph must have something about the Lisburn bombing. John suggested something like "despite the appalling attack on Thiepval Barracks and the recent arms finds". Additional comments were as follows:
4. In paragraph 4, third tiret, of the paper John felt we should consider changing the word 'permanent' as there was no direct evidence from Adams that a permanent ceasefire was on the cards. He felt we might change this to 'further' or provide a fuller explanation as to why we felt there was some evidence for this.
5. Paragraph 7 and Annex C were thought to overstate our case regarding the lack of changes in policy in Hume's suggestions. This was a matter of judgement and several items (eg the creation of a new policing service) would certainly be seen as significant changes in policy to others. We would at least need to shade the language of paragraph 7 and Annex C to tone down our claim that the substantive differences between our text and Hume's are small. He also thought that the reference to "I shall be meeting the Taoiseach before the end of the year" was unnecessary. Although this was the PM's intention and expectation, we should not be seen to be pushed into this by Hume.
6. Under the heading 'Follow up Action', we might not want to show the new text to the Irish and US Governments. We might rather wish to discuss our approach with both Governments but that, as previously, we may not want to show them the text before our response had issued.
7. On the proposed text, John expressed general concern about the number of deletions at Hume's request. The extent of these deletions would cause concern at NI and he suggested that we should

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look again at whether all of them were necessary or appropriate. He wondered whether some of the text deleted might be reinserted, if only in square brackets, specifically the reference to the need for support for parties representing the majority of both communities (para 3), the references to "the Government considered that" (para 5) and "unequivocal ceasefire" (para 5), and our language on decommissioning. John felt that we should look again at all of these deletions as, the more we were seen to make concessions to Hume, the more difficult it would be to persuade the PM and NI that our position had not changed.

8. John returned to his concern about the phrase "without blocking the negotiations". He acknowledged that this had appeared in the PM's Dublin article, but said it had caused difficulty when published. He asked us to reconsider the use of this phrase as he felt that it could cause difficulty again.

9. As discussed, I understand you are producing a revised paper for the Secretary of State's consideration.

(SIGNED)

ROBERT CRAWFORD
Private Secretary

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