

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**From:** John Holmes  
**Date:** 10 December 1997

**PRIME MINISTER**

**cc:** Jonathan Powell  
Alastair Campbell  
Philip Barton

**SINN FEIN**

I attach extensive briefing from the NIO. The security and prisoners stuff is worth ploughing through, so you are familiar with the issues and ready to respond. Mo can of course help out on detail. We have a pre-meeting at 1345.

The record of your last meeting with Adams is also attached, together with his press conference yesterday.

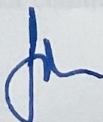
Latest intelligence elsewhere in the box.

You need to strike the right balance between a tough line on violence, not least so you can say you said it, and making Sinn Fein feel part of the process, so there is something for them to stay in for. They are worried that they don't get the publicity they used to, and bilateral discussions between us and Trimble and Ahern and Trimble, are cutting them out. There may be an important republican meeting on 12 December, and we need the input to be positive.

I attach the bare bones of a suggested "opening statement" by you, and a few key lines to take on the talks thereafter.

Mo is doing lots of media all day tomorrow. As discussed, you should also do something for TV yourself after the meeting. Alastair is setting up a pool interview, probably at 1600.

JOHN HOLMES



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