

FROM: QUENTIN THOMAS  
POLITICAL DIRECTOR  
26 NOVEMBER 1996



cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - B  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (B&L) - B  
PS/PUS (B&L) - B  
PS/Sir David Fell - B  
Mr Steele - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Leach - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Wood (B&L) - B  
Mr Stephens - B  
Mr Cornick - B  
Mr Hill (B&L) - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Perry - B  
Mr Priestly - B  
HMA Dublin - B  
Ms Jude - B  
Ms Mapstone - B  
Ms Bharucha - B

PS/Michael Ancram

**PUBLICATION OF HUME/ADAMS: TIMING**

Michael Ancram asked me to prepare a few notes as an aide memoire for the Secretary of State's VCR discussion this evening.

2. Hume is apparently to meet Adams on Wednesday. The Irish side report that Sinn Fein are considering the text and that they will meet the Irish again perhaps on Saturday. The Americans are taking a close interest. If this exercise were being carried forward privately there would be a strong case for waiting the outcome of these activities. The fact that Mr Trimble has seen the text is another constraint. He is not however happy with what he has seen and there is a case for HMG delaying publication until at least some of the players would support its position.

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3. Adams has however now gone public strongly hinting that HMG's proposals are not acceptable. This means that any delay risks being seen as a period where we negotiate a new position. This accordingly tilts the argument somewhat towards publication this week.

(Signed)

QUENTIN THOMAS that since Peis will, in any case, "redouble its efforts" to choose the peace process

publish on Thursday

For

Brings exercise to early completion.

Reduces destabilising effects of uncertainty. UNP concerns etc.

Gives time for careful launch plan centering on Prime Minister's questions.

publish next week

For

Gives time for efforts of HMG, Irish Government and Americans to mature.

Increased chance of an end game where HMG is supported by Americans and Irish Government.

Increases chances of reaching ceasefire (but only if we are prepared to modify our position perhaps towards the Chatterbox/Huber scheme perhaps originating in Washington).

Looks like a good version.

Looks like a good version (who is to see Adams on Wednesday). Irish and Americans.

HIO Ministers unavailable.

Against

Will mean publishing before efforts of HMG, Irish Government and, probably, US Government have matured.

HMG is likely to be isolated - even UNP unhappy.

Against

Will mean extended delay and destabilisation with much now being said publicly.

Will lead to appearance of HMG negotiating for a ceasefire.

Will convince UNP unhappy (though they appear to be unhappy with the present text).

HMG loses initiative.

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**Publish on Wednesday**

**For**

Avoid extending the delay.

Avoids the appearance that we are in negotiation.

Responds to Adams public signal that our scheme is unacceptable.

Picks up the hint that Sinn Fein will, in any case, "redouble its efforts" to secure the peace process.

**Publish on Thursday**

**For**

Brings exercise to early conclusion.

Dampens destabilising effects of uncertainty, UUP concern etc.

Gives time for careful launch plan centering on Prime Minister's questions.

**Publish next week**

**For**

Gives time for efforts of Hume, Irish Government and Americans to mature.

Increased chance of an end game where HMG is supported by Americans and Irish Government.

Increases chances of securing ceasefire (but only if we are prepared to modify our position perhaps towards the Christmas break scheme perhaps originating in Washington).

**Against**

Leaves little time to line up US, Irish Government, Hume, Trimble etc.

Looks like a panic reaction.

Risks alienating Hume (who is to see Adams on Wednesday), Irish and Americans.

NIO Ministers unavailable.

**Against**

Will mean publishing before efforts of Hume, Irish Government and, probably, US Government have matured.

HMG is likely to be isolated - even UUP unhappy.

**Against**

Will mean extended delay and destabilisation with much now being said publicly.

Will lead to appearance of HMG negotiating for a ceasefire.

Will maximise UUP concern (though they appear to be unhappy with the present text).

HMG loses initiative.

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