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FROM: PS/PUS  
21 MARCH 1996

3. Mr Hume had arrived from the USA at lunchtime, and was clearly very tired. While angry at the start, Mr Hume was not as difficult as he could have been on the terms.

cc. PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - B  
PS/Michael Ancram (L&B) - B  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L&B) - B  
PS/Sir David Fell - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Leach - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Wood (L&B) - B  
Mrs Brown - B  
Mr Hill - B  
Mr Maccabe - B  
Mr Stephens - B  
Mr Beeton - B  
Ms Checksfield - B  
Mr Lamont, RID, FCO - B  
HMA Dublin - B  
Mr Holmes, No.10

*Anita Branchu*  
ANITA BRANCHU  
PRIVATE SECRETARY  
21 MARCH 1996

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

TELEPHONE CALL FROM JOHN HUME, 21 MARCH 1996

John Hume telephoned PUS this evening, following the Prime Minister's statement. Mr Hume began by saying that today was totally disastrous and was the blackest day he had seen in 25 years. He said that he had had intensive talks with Mr Adams in America, and thought then that they were close to a restoration of the ceasefire; this, he continued, had now been lost because of the effect that the Prime Minister's statement would undoubtedly have.

2. PUS urged Mr Hume to look at the statement in more detail, and reflect on the consultation paper. Mr Hume said that he could not believe that HMG had come up with 'a 110 member Assembly' which would pass resolutions. PUS again urged Mr Hume to look at the detail and pointed to the safeguards of a weighted majority which would be built in by Bill, and the one way valve. Mr Hume ignored this and asked why the Government had not simply called all party talks. Mr Hume said that the Unionists had refused to come to the table and had been rewarded for this; he said that this seemed to show that the way to deal with HMG was to adopt a hard line negotiating stance - he contrasted this approach with the honest and open approach which the SDLP had taken.

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Comment

3. Mr Hume had arrived from the USA at lunchtime, and was clearly very tired. While angry at the start, Mr Hume was not as difficult as he could have been and the conversation ended on good terms.

Anita Bharucha

ANITA BHARUCHA  
PRIVATE SECRETARY  
21 MARCH 1996

cc PS/Secretary of State(L,StTakes)  
PS/Michael Antram(L,StTakes)  
Mr Watkins  
Mr Boston  
Mr LJR Hill  
Mr MacCabe  
Mr Stephens(L&Takes)  
Mr Lyndal R10/PCO  
WMA Sullivan  
Mr Holmes No.10

Dr Nowlan telephoned FUS today briefly, following FUS' briefing of Dr Nowlan and Mr Blair yesterday evening.

3. Dr Nowlan said that she had been reflecting on the SDLP's likely reaction; she saw two items which, if addressed in the Statement or the surrounding events, she thought may prevent the SDLP from walking away:

- (i) It should be made explicit, possibly in the Bill, that the transition from elections to negotiations would be ensured;
- (ii) it should be made implicit that the Unionists would not be allowed to block negotiations over decommissioning.

3. Having said this, Dr Nowlan also said that the SDLP were not acting rationally, but were united and that there was a real danger of them boycotting elections.

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