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10 DOWNING STREET
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FILE
DA
bc

14 November 1996

From the Private Secretary

Dear Sir,

HUME/ADAMS INITIATIVE

Thank you for your letters of 8 and 13 November.

We have already been in touch about the draft letter to NI, and I have sent you a revised version agreed by the Prime Minister.

For the rest, the Prime Minister is less inclined to believe that a new and credible ceasefire is a real possibility. He is in any case not ready to make the first move towards the Irish, when they have not so far come back to us. He does not believe that would be good tactics.

The Prime Minister has not been able to consider in detail the new language you suggest for paragraphs 7 to 9 of the draft statement. But you may like to consider the attached slightly revised version, which I think, on the basis of a brief discussion, would be more likely to be attractive to him.

We may in any case have to look at all this afresh. As you know, Irish officials are meeting Sinn Fein again at 1200 tomorrow, in order to hear Sinn Fein's response. The Irish will no doubt let us know rapidly what this is. We may need some quick advice for the weekend.

I am copying this to Jan Polley (Cabinet Office) and Veronica Sutherland in Dublin (by fax).

Yours etc
John

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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**PARAGRAPHS 7 TO 9 OF POSSIBLE TEXT IN RESPONSE TO HUME
TEXT OF 10 OCTOBER**

7. Both Governments consider that, following the declaration by the IRA of an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire with the stated intent of never resuming the conflict, the process of Sinn Fein's entry into negotiations could be as follows:

- Meetings with Sinn Fein to explore with them the nature of the ceasefire, what assurances could be given and confidence-building measures established;
- the British and Irish Governments would invite Sinn Fein to meet them together for the purpose of making a total and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence, a commitment already made by all the current participants who could also be present at this meeting;
- the two Governments would report this commitment to the independent chairmen and invite them formally to notify the other participants;
- the two Governments would then propose bilateral and other consultations to seek to determine how, if Sinn Fein entered, the negotiations could most constructively be advanced, including the issue of the participants adopting an agreed indicative timeframe for the conduct of the negotiations and for taking stock of their progress;

8. The satisfactory conclusion of this process would turn on whether words, actions and all the circumstances were consistent with the declared ceasefire. For example, whether or not any paramilitary activity, including surveillance,

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targeting and weapons preparation, continued would be relevant. Developments which were incompatible with an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire or Sinn Fein's commitment to the Mitchell principles would affect the process of entry adversely. Sufficient time would have to be taken to ensure the requirements of paragraphs 8 and 9 of Command Paper 3232 were met before Sinn Fein were invited to participate in negotiations.

9. From their entry into negotiations onwards, Sinn Fein would, in common with all the other participants, be subject to all the agreed provisions and rules of procedure. These include those governing the contingency where any participant is no longer entitled to participate on the grounds that they have demonstrably dishonoured the principles of democracy and non-violence.

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