



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA



From the Private Secretary

20 November 1996

*Dear Gen,*

HUME/ADAMS

I attach a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Andrew Hunter MP.

I would in any case be grateful for a rapid draft reply from the Prime Minister. In acknowledging the letter, I am telling Mr Hunter that his concerns are not justified.

*Yours ever*  
*John*

JOHN HOLMES

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ACT 2000

Ken Lindsay Esq  
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✓ JH



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon John Major MP  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

19th November, 1996.

*Dear Prime Minister,*

Please may I express an opinion on the current situation re Northern Ireland.

Following my visit to Dublin last week where I met key officials, I had a detailed conversation with John Hume last night. He confirmed and clarified my understanding of the immediate circumstances. The Secretary of State also briefed me last week. I also spoke to UUP Members yesterday.

John Hume confirmed the Provisionals' four conditions for a ceasefire:

- guaranteed immediate entry into substantive negotiations;
- a 'guideline' time-frame for the talks;
- an end to demands for decommissioning before or during talks;
- and confidence-building measures (including action on prisoners).

He also told me of the form of words which the Provisionals had proposed you should use to secure an immediate ceasefire.

Hume's proposals worry me greatly. As I understand matters, each one demands a retreat of varying magnitude from the position which you have adopted. In my opinion, if the proposals were followed:

- there would be very grave disquiet on the back-benches;
- the UUP and DUP would withdraw from the talks - and withdraw their fragile support of the Government;
- the concessions would encourage the Provisionals to increase their demands, believing that [once again] violence had yielded dividends.

In short, I believe that to follow Hume's route would be disastrous for the Process.

*Yours ever,  
Andrew*

Andrew Hunter MP