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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

4 November 1996

*Dear Ken,*

**HUME/ADAMS INITIATIVE**

Thank you for your letter of 1 November. We have since been in touch over the weekend about the leak in the Sunday Tribune and the line we should take. This has not come out too badly so far, and we should hold the line where it is as far as possible. The Irish Government and John Hume share this view, and Unionist reaction has so far been containable. But we will need to continue behind-the-scenes briefing to ensure that reactions continue to be restrained.

Hume told me on 3 November that he was due to meet Adams again at 1600 on 4 November, hopefully to take delivery of a text from Adams, and would be in touch with me thereafter. The Irish Government have also been in close touch with Hume over the weekend and are aware of the position.

Obviously there was no need for the draft statement on a possible ceasefire which was enclosed with your letter. The exact terms of any statement will depend very much on what the IRA and Sinn Fein say, but the Prime Minister thought that the draft enclosed with your letter was in any case not usable as it stood. I attach a shorter draft to show the sort of thing the Prime Minister would have in mind.

Finally, Dr Paisley was in touch late on Sunday night to ask for an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister, since it seemed from the media that all other Party leaders had been having them. I would be grateful for rapid advice on this. There is no great enthusiasm here to reward Dr Paisley's recent contribution with a quick meeting, but it will no doubt be difficult to keep him at bay for long.

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

*Yours ever*

**JOHN HOLMES**

Ken Lindsay, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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## POSSIBLE STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

I welcome the announcement by the IRA of a new ceasefire. It is a recognition that the return to violence of last February was a dead end. It would not and could not sway the British Government's policy. Our first thoughts must be with the needless victims of that futile violence.

Politics not violence is indeed the way forward, and I look forward to the accumulation of evidence that Sinn Fein and the IRA fully accept that. It is for them to demonstrate that this time the ceasefire will last, and to convince all concerned of their commitment to exclusively peaceful methods. No-one will be more delighted than I if they can do so.

Under the legislation setting up the multi-party talks, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland can invite Sinn Fein to join the multi-party talks in Belfast when he is convinced that a new ceasefire is genuinely unequivocal. Let Sinn Fein and the IRA now convince us, by their words and their actions, that this is so. Clearly such a judgement cannot be reached immediately.

John

John

JOHN HOLMES

Ken Lindsay Esq  
Northern Ireland Office