

From: JOHN HOLMES
Date: 11 November 1996

file
John Holmes

PRIME MINISTER

HUME/ADAMS

Teahon has been in touch over the weekend and again today. The Irish are still struggling to get out of Sinn Fein the kind of language about a ceasefire we have asked for. They have had a direct meeting with Adams and McGuinness, where the latter said that, if we published a satisfactory text, there would definitely be a ceasefire, which would be for good - in the judgement of Adams and McGuinness. But Adams and McGuinness had also made clear that they could not secure language of the kind you had suggested to Hume ("The present leadership, etc."). They were ready to look at other formulations - but have not come up with anything satisfactory yet.

broke unbridgeable...
so we will be pressed
to move, no doubt. I don't
think we can -
or should.
12/11

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The Irish had helpfully said there was no point discussing our text further unless Sinn Fein could come up with the right answers on language surrounding a ceasefire.

Teahon is not promising to come back to us by a specific time. I have made clear we cannot hang on much longer but have not pressed this point too hard yet.

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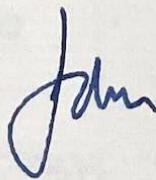
Meanwhile we know the Irish, Hume and Sinn Fein have been trying to enlist US support. I spoke to Lake today myself. He was carefully neutral and did not press for us to take a different view from that which we have taken so far.

I attach the latest intelligence reports, which bring out some of the background activity to the above picture, not least Irish efforts with the Americans. Your proposed conversation with Clinton on Zaire tomorrow is also an opportunity to get across our side of the story on Northern Ireland before he is too influenced by Lake/Soderberg. I will do a speaking note accordingly.

Overall, for the moment our position remains relatively comfortable. The Irish are putting pressure on Sinn Fein, not us, and the Americans are holding off. The Irish will no doubt try to shift the emphasis back to us at some point but can only do so plausibly and effectively if they get more out of Sinn Fein than looks at all likely. We may need to bring things to a head later this week since we need to get something out in public on our criteria for Sinn Fein's post-ceasefire entry.

Meanwhile I suggest we let NI know, by letter, where we stand.

Content?



JOHN HOLMES

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