

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

flw.

From the Private Secretary

9 November 1996

Dear Ken.

HUME/ADAMS INITIATIVE

As reported on the telephone, Paddy Teahon rang this morning with an account of a long meeting which he, Dalton and O'huiGinn had had last evening with Adams and McGuinness.

Adams and McGuinness had been clear on two points. If we could publish a satisfactory text:

- there would be a ceasefire;
- and it would be for good - in Adams'/McGuinness' judgement.

There had then been a discussion of what their declaration might contain; and similarly of the content of the Prime Minister's article.

Adams/McGuinness had been adamant that they could not secure a reference to "the present leadership". There were many reasons for this, including IRA theology. However, the declaration could contain an unequivocal cessation in the terms of August 1994. This could be surrounded by words underlining its permanence. Teahon said that he and his colleagues had repeatedly emphasised that without these surrounding words, there was no prospect of the British Government allowing Sinn Fein into the talks.

Adams and McGuinness had said they would need to discuss all this further with others: particularly what exactly the "surrounding words" on permanence might say.

The meeting had also gone through Sinn Fein's desired amendments to the Prime Minister's article. Teahon said that he and his colleagues had

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

knocked a number of these back. Again, Adams and McGuinness had said they would need to consult others further. They would revert to Teahon on both points - surrounding words and textual amendments - either later today (Saturday) or - more likely - on Sunday morning.

I asked Teahon about the nature of the Sinn Fein amendments. He was not to be drawn, but implied they were still significant. The requirement for talks to be completed within 6 months still seems to be there. And while Sinn Fein claim to have no problem with the concept of negotiations, they will not permit a reference to consent, because they see this as giving the Unionists a veto.

Comment

In short, while we shall have to see what Sinn Fein come back with later today or tomorrow, on present indications it seems unlikely to be enough.

I did not refer to the possible way forward described in your letter last night. As we subsequently discussed, that would probably be better kept for a later stage. If and when we reach impasse on the present round, we shall probably need to have a stratagem to hand to show that, despite the odds, we still remain constructive and open-minded.

I will be in touch again as soon as Teahon reverts.

I am copying this letter to William Ehrman (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office) and by fax to Veronica Sutherland in Dublin.

Yours,
Ed; Eddie

EP

EDWARD OAKDEN

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

CONFIDENTIAL