

File
Hume

CALL TO BRUTON

- Disappointed by your negative reaction to the very reasonable text we sent you yesterday.
- Took account of your strongly expressed concerns and moved away from explicit 3-month period.
- But political bottom line is that immediate entry of Sinn Fein into talks after a new ceasefire is not credible and will not run here. No doubt all Unionists would walk out anyway.
- We must take some time to evaluate the words and actions of the IRA and Sinn Fein. (Ack of R requires us too). We will
- If the IRA and Sinn Fein are prepared to use words which suggest permanence, that will obviously be a very positive factor in the balance - I also told Hume that positive words on parallel decommissioning and the consent principle would help.
- But even these words, unless they really were dramatic, would leave some work to do to convince ourselves and others that this was really lasting.
- You yourself have made clear publicly that the IRA and Sinn Fein would need to demonstrate the credible nature of any new ceasefire. You also told me yourself that we could only expect another tactical ceasefire.

- Why are you now convinced that the position has changed? The evidence we see certainly does not convince us.

- If you can produce real evidence that the IRA are ready to accept that the war is over for good, and to say so, would be ready to take back to colleagues and look again.

- But short of that, cannot move from present position, and would prefer to tell Hume what it is, to avoid misunderstandings. Ready to publish thereafter.

- Do not believe this could be seen as unreasonable. If Sinn Fein really want a ceasefire, there is no obstacle to them declaring one. We will respond as flexibly and imaginatively as we can.

- We have been flexible throughout this exercise, despite our doubts. But after the bombs and the evidence of preparation for more, we cannot simply let Sinn Fein in on day one. Process would collapse immediately.

- If this initiative breaks down on this point, will be very regrettable. But we will be comfortable with our position, and it will not be the end of the story. We will certainly continue our efforts.