

**PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL**

(24)

**10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA**

From the Private Secretary

23 January 1997

*Dear Paddy,*

Thank you for sending me the text of what the Taoiseach said in the Dail yesterday, in response to questions. I have shown this to the Prime Minister, who has asked me to pass on his congratulations to the Taoiseach for the way in which he spoke.

Reverting to the plans of John Hume, about which I wrote to you yesterday, I understand that he has now accepted that efforts to build on the 10 October statement are unlikely to lead anywhere in present circumstances. I believe that he is now reflecting on the possibility of putting some questions to us himself (rather than Gerry Adams) about the possible timing of Sinn Fein's entry to the talks process after an unequivocal ceasefire. We have made clear that our position has not changed since our November statement, but that we are happy to repeat what we said then, if that will help. We will wait to see what he comes up with.

I will keep you in touch, but meanwhile would again be grateful if you could keep this to yourself if John has not briefed you or the Taoiseach himself (which I hope he has done or will do).

*Yours are  
John***JOHN HOLMES**

Mr Paddy Teahan

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