

Covering CONFIDENTIAL



FAKED
NIO, PCO, Dublin 2100
30.4

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

30 November 1996

Dear Ken,

HUME/ADAMS: IRISH REACTIONS

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Taoiseach, which we have just (2030 Saturday) received from the Taoiseach's office. It seems to be something of an olive branch, and will obviously be relevant to any discussion between the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach in the margins of Lisbon on Monday.

I am copying this letter to William Ehrman (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), and by fax to Veronica Sutherland (Dublin), whom I have also briefed by phone.

Yours ever,

Edward Oakden

EDWARD OAKDEN

Ken Lindsay Esq
Northern Ireland Office

Covering CONFIDENTIAL



Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

File

cc Ed
J.H.

SUBJECT
MASTER

Filed on:

30 November, 1996

The Rt. Hon. John Major, M.P.,
Prime Minister

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 29 November.

I do believe strongly that the co-operation of our two Governments is essential if we are to achieve lasting peace. For that reason, I have been anxious to minimise controversy.

You referred to duress. In my view it is important that either of us tell the other, as an honest statement of fact, that a decision is potentially damaging where he believes the circumstances warrant it. We had, of course, no difficulty with your setting out your position. We did, and still do, find it difficult to understand why that exercise could not have been delayed for 48 hours. That would have enabled John Hume to report to you on his very material latest contact with Gerry Adams. It could have given us an opportunity to ensure that the statement had some chance of securing what we saw as the objective of the exercise, namely an IRA ceasefire.

As to the future, we now need to establish whether an inclusive process is possible and if so under what conditions. I welcome the fact that your statement was designed to ensure the doors are being kept open, but we would need everyone to be clear on the terms.



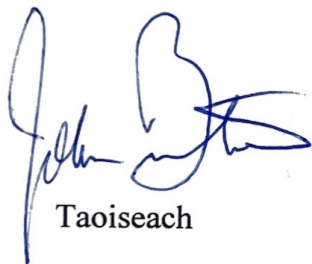
Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

- 2 -

I look forward to a full discussion of this on December 9th, and perhaps to a preliminary one in the margins of the meeting in Lisbon. You are aware of my political outlook on the issues in question. I have long admired your courage and determination in the face of domestic difficulties.

With warmer regards

Yours sincerely



Taoiseach