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- A copy of this was destroyed (I may have been Beeton's copy) PZ 218 -

Roderic Lyne

MEETING WITH JOHN HUME

The Prime Minister is to see Mr Hume on Thursday afternoon. Sir Patrick and John Chilcot will also be present.

This may prove a difficult meeting. So we have provided a full and therefore lengthy line to take, but with a short summary.

Objectives

There are three objectives for the meeting. First to persuade Mr Hume that the two Governments have a serious interest in securing peace, on terms consistent with their principles, and have accordingly considered the Joint Declaration approach with great care, but have concluded that it does not offer a way forward.

This is because the admittedly one-sided language and content of the Joint Declaration would provoke a Unionist and Loyalist reaction. Against the expectations of and fears about the Hume/Adams dialogue over a period, and in particular since the joint Hume/Adams demarche of 25 September, the reaction to the making of such a Declaration would in our judgement be very severe. This reaction would call in question confidence in HMG and its fidelity to its stated policies. Even if the Provisionals' intentions to end their campaign was sincere they would be unable to resist responding to Loyalist provocation.

The second objective is to explain to Mr Hume that while the two Governments have, as was made public in Brussels, decided not to adopt or endorse his report, they have not abandoned the possibility of building on elements of the Joint Declaration approach. It is important that he is persuaded to make no public reference to that. If he does so, we may forced to bring this work to an end.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

The third objective is to bring Mr Hume and the SDLP to wholehearted commitment to the Talks process, and to encourage him to bring his exchanges with Mr Adams to an end.

What Mr Hume knows

Mr Hume has seen some but probably not all of the texts the Irish side has given us. He referred to one of these at his last meeting with the Prime Minister on 16 September. Attached, and marked as JD.8, is the latest text we know John Hume has had from the Irish Government. It was given to the British side by Irish officials on 24 September. We were told that at that time it had not been shown to the Provisionals and that it would not be unless it were known HMG could accept it. The Irish may also have shown Mr Hume a slightly amended version of the last text we had from them (marked JD.11 - also attached.) The more refined text which was shown to Mr Molyneux was never passed to the Irish side.

Mr Hume has also shown us himself (generally through John Chilcot) earlier versions of a Joint Declaration.

The Prime Minister will want to acknowledge that we have seen these various texts. If pressed, he can emphasise that we have consistently said to Mr Hume - most recently at his last meeting with the Prime Minister - that the drafts we have been shown are a very long way from what would be acceptable. It remains the case, however, that we have not seen the report (if indeed one exists) of the outcome of the Hume/Adams dialogue as presented to the Taoiseach.

Irish relations with Mr Hume

When the Prime Minister said in the House on Monday that the Taoiseach shared his view that the Hume/Adams proposals could not be proceeded with, Mr Hume was visibly shocked. He appears not to have read, or understood, or believed, the reference in last Friday's joint statement (also attached) to the two Governments agreeing that:

"... there could be no question of their adopting or endorsing the report of the dialogue ..."

There is separate evidence to suggest Mr Hume blames the Irish Government for this outcome and there is consequently a serious rift in their relationship. I am arranging for you separately to receive a report on this, which I think the Secretary of State has already mentioned to the Prime Minister.

A copy goes to John Sawers and Melanie Leech.

Yours truly,

Jonathan Stephens

JONATHAN STEPHENS
Private Secretary

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