

(b)

S E C R E T   A N D   P E R S O N A L

**SPEAKING NOTE**

You will have been watching with interest and concern developments since John Hume and Gerry Adams announced their intention to report to Dublin on the outcome of their talks.

I can give you a categorical assurance that John Hume has not been acting for the Government in any respect. There have been no proxy negotiations. My position, publicly and privately, is that there can be no talks or negotiations with those who engage or support use of violence.

We are not ourselves fully in the picture, and we are waiting for further information or proposals from the Irish Government should it seem to them that there is something worth putting to us.

It is possible that something serious and important is happening. There may be an opportunity which we have a duty to explore to bring an end to the IRA's violence in Northern Ireland.

Be assured too that your interests, the interests of the people of Northern Ireland, will be at the front of our minds in considering anything the Irish Government propose to us because they are our common interests.

There has of course been intense, even fevered, speculation since the Hume/Adams statement. Despite this it is a time for discretion. If anything develops out of this I shall naturally speak to you again in good time.

I have not thought it right at this time to brief others, including Dr Paisley.

S E C R E T   A N D   P E R S O N A L

JEN/L/10/2/46367