

PUS/424
06 DEC 1990
N.I.O. LONDON

FROM: PS/SECRETARY OF STATE
6 DECEMBER 1990

Copy no of [3]

cc. PS/Secretary of State (L) [2]
Mr Deverell [3]

PUS [1]

POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND THE PROVISIONALS

Mr Hume called on the Secretary of State in his room in the House last night. I was also present.

2. Mr Hume said that Mr Adams had spoken to him the previous Wednesday [28 November]. Mr Adams had said that the Secretary of State's speech on 9 November had caused a lot of discussion within the Republican movement, and indeed had been discussed by the Provisional's "think tank" which had a wide ranging membership. If the Irish Government were prepared to go ahead with the idea of an all-Ireland Council (according to Mr Hume, first proposed by himself some 2 years ago), then he (Adams) would be prepared to take the risk and go to the Army Council to ask them to stop the violence. He would however insist on meeting privately with Mr Haughey in advance of this.

3. Continuing, Mr Hume said that he was hoping to see Mr Haughey next week and would recommend acceptance of this proposal. It would be a private meeting conducted on the basis of complete confidentiality.

4. Mr Hume said that one of the difficulties with getting the Provisionals to agree to a ceasefire was their experience of what had happened in the mid-70s. Apparently, following the ceasefire, it had proved much more difficult than they had thought to restart

the violence. He would therefore like the Secretary of State to consider a further proposition. This was that a senior Civil Servant should come to Mr Hume's home, where they would simply be joined by two people, unnamed but with the right connection, for a discussion. In recognition of the political difficulties, he would be willing to talk to Mr Kinnock about this and was confident that he would secure his agreement to the meeting taking place. The Secretary of State took note.

5. Mr Hume said that he had been encouraged by news from the Redemptorists, whose strongholds were in Limerick and West Belfast. In the latter case, they were effectively the Catholic Church. Both Father Reid and the Head of the Order (in Dublin) had been in touch both with the Irish Government and with Mr Hume to say that they felt that there was now an opportunity to end the violence. There was also the article by Father Reid in the Irish Times (of 29 November). The Secretary of State then referred to Sir Geoffrey Howe's recent letter and commented that in this respect also there had been encouraging signs. (I subsequently gave Mr Hume our fax number, and he agreed to send us a copy of Father Reid's letter to him.)

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6. In response to a question from the Secretary of State as to how the use of "human bombs" was viewed within the Provisional movement, Mr Hume said that he had raised this with Mr Adams, expressing his revulsion at the depths to which the Provisionals had sunk. Mr Adams' reply was that he (Mr Hume) would be surprised at how many in the Republican movement also thought that.

7. The remainder of the discussion with Mr Hume has been recorded separately, but in relation to Mr Adams' response to the Secretary of State's 9 November speech Mr Hume had said to Mr Adams that, if the latter wanted to respond, he should send a copy of his remarks direct to the Secretary of State. This Mr Adams has done.

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8. Although the Secretary of State gave no commitment on the question of a meeting with the Provisionals, Mr Hume is likely to return to this proposal. Once you have had an opportunity to consider the matter (and perhaps look at the 1970s papers?), the Secretary of State would welcome a short discussion. I will be in touch separately about a time for this.

- Mr Alston [5]
- Mr Deverell [6]
- Mr Thomas [7]
- Mr Marsh [8]
- File [9]

JEN/PUS (B&L) [162]

POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND THE PROVISIONALS

1. Since my meeting with the prison chaplains yesterday I have been reflecting on the possibilities of testing the sincerity of the contacts and encouraging any movement away from violence if that is possible while at the same time reducing, by the greatest degree possible, the risk that we could be criticised for being in dialogue with PIRA/Sinn Fein before violence had ceased. I offer the

A J D PAWSON for the debate today.

PRIVATE SECRETARY

6 DECEMBER 1990 have in mind does not eliminate risk - it can't unless we remain totally at stand off. However I wonder if we could pursue an immediate strategy which would entail

(i) a clarification to PAC - better face to face; less than ideal through the chaplains (see below) - of the British Government's position on Northern Ireland in the British Presence Speech;

(ii) an assurance that Government has no wish to exclude the Republican Movement from political dialogue;

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(iii) a commitment to engage in dialogue with the Republican Movement but only through its elected representatives in Sinn Fein when the PAC has publicly called for an end to violence;

(? - 6 that has, transmitted into action?)