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22 November 1993

From the Private Secretary

cc PS/SofS(B) - Mr Stephens
Michael Ancram
PS/PUS(L)
Mr Thomas
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Beverell
Mr Cooke
Mr Rickard
Mr Beeton
Mr May

Dear Jonathan,

**NORTHERN IRELAND: PRIME MINISTER'S TELEPHONE
CONVERSATIONS WITH THE TAOISEACH AND WITH
JAMES MOLYNEAUX MP**

As you know, the Prime Minister spoke on the telephone to Albert Reynolds on the evening of Saturday 20 November, and to James Molyneaux on the afternoon of Sunday 21 November.

The Taoiseach

The Prime Minister said that he had been moderately optimistic after his meeting on 18 November with Archbishop Eames. However, the subsequent leak of an Irish Government document on 19 November, and Hume/Adams statement on 20 November, had had a disastrous effect. They had pushed the helpful Unionists into a corner and had provided a target for the unhelpful ones. The Hume/Adams statement made it appear to people that, despite the action taken by the British and Irish governments in Brussels on 29 October, Hume and Adams were back in business. We had to make it clear that we were not working on the basis of Hume/Adams. The Prime Minister hoped the Taoiseach would do so on the Frost programme. He also hoped that Reynolds might be able to persuade Hume to shut up. It would be fatal if Hume gave the impression that he could negotiate concessions for Adams. Hume was a saintly man, but was becoming the biggest danger to the process.

The Taoiseach said that he had tried previously to restrain Hume, and had also asked others to try. After his meeting with the Prime Minister in

Downing Street, Hume had said that he needed to have one further meeting with Adams to report the outcome. That was how the Taoiseach interpreted this meeting. The content of their statement had been innocuous.

The Prime Minister said that the only message that we wanted to hear from Adams was that there would be a cessation of violence. This was why Hume had to be discouraged from continuing his dialogue. The Taoiseach said he would try to do this when he returned home.

The Prime Minister said that he would make clear as necessary that we stood by the Brussels statement that there was no question of adopting or endorsing the Hume/Adams dialogue. The Taoiseach replied that he would take the line that he was working on a government-to-government basis which had started long ago, at his first meeting with the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister said there was a risk that the Unionists would think that the two governments were simply providing cover for the Hume/Adams dialogue. The Taoiseach said that we knew this was not really the case. But the sooner we could complete our joint work, the better its chance of success. The Taoiseach said that he was still working for and hoping to achieve a cessation of violence.

Molyneaux

The Prime Minister spoke to Mr. Molyneaux to follow up your Secretary of State's conversation with him on the previous day.

The Prime Minister first assured Mr. Molyneaux that there was no truth in the story in "The Mail on Sunday" about plans for an amnesty or for a British withdrawal in 20 years time.

Mr. Molyneaux seemed relatively relaxed about this. He said that he had not seen or heard of the article. The IRA had put out an earlier version of the "20 year story" three weeks ago. They did not want the British to withdraw soon if that meant handing over to the "locals" (i.e. the Protestant majority).

The Prime Minister said that there were many rumours flying about. This would inevitably continue. He hoped that Mr. Molyneaux would let him know if any stories caused concern.

Mr. Molyneaux said that the statement which he had issued on 20 November had been intended to help the Prime Minister. It had been aimed at

people who were trying to bring pressure on the Prime Minister, and not aimed at the Prime Minister himself.

The Prime Minister referred to the leak of the Irish Government paper. Mr. Molyneux said that he already reported what he had heard about this to your Secretary of State - that the document had been dated 2 November, was intended for delivery in the 3 November IGC, and had been suppressed by the Taoiseach.

The Prime Minister said that he had made it very clear that the outcome of the Hume/Adams dialogue would not provide an acceptable basis. He regretted that not everyone had yet grasped this point.

Mr. Molyneux said that he would keep in touch, and would welcome a further private meeting with the Prime Minister after he had spoken in the House on 23 November.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Sawers (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Melanie Leech (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Roderic

RODERIC LYNE

Jonathan Stephens, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.