

MEETING WITH MR JOHN HUME

Objectives

1. 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 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.

2. To bring Mr Hume and the SDLP to wholehearted commitment to the Talks process.

Points to make

1. Appreciate your efforts to secure peace; the commitment you have brought to this; and your courage and imagination. The Taoiseach and I have expressed this publicly.

2. As you know the Taoiseach gave me an account of the outcome of your dialogue with Adams in the light of the Irish Government's own assessment of these and other related matters.



3. We both agreed that there could be no question of our adopting or endorsing the report of the dialogue which you gave the Taoiseach. (We have not seen the report. But I believe your exchange with Adams concerns various Joint Declaration formulations.)

4. You have urged publicly that there is an opportunity here which might be missed and made it clear that you would like to put the matter to me directly. I am of course anxious to have your own assessment of the Provisionals' intentions and attitudes, and your own judgement about the prospects of them ending their campaign. Please tell me about this...

In response (and on the assumption that Mr Hume advocates the Joint Declaration approach)

5. I have of course considered the Joint Declaration approach. You have shown us some text in the past and, more recently, the Irish Government as you will know has shown us their own development of this approach. [Mr Hume has seen some but probably not all of the texts the Irish side has given us. 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. Also attached is the more refined text (marked JD.12) which was what was shown to Mr Molyneaux but not passed on to the Irish side. It is a slightly amended version of the last text we had from the Irish side (marked JD.11) which they may have shown to Mr Hume].



6. Our approach to these matters is of course governed by the principles the Taoiseach and I enunciated in our joint statement in Brussels on 29 October. These made it clear that there can be no talks or negotiations between our Governments and those who use, threaten or support violence for political ends; and that there could be no secret agreements or understandings between Governments and organisations supporting violence as a price for its cessation. Do you agree with the principles?

7. We have had to assess the impact such a Joint Declaration would have in the light of the hostile climate created by knowledge of your dialogue over a period, and in particular since the demarche of 25 September. Since then uncertainty and suspicion have been increasing with each day that passes, more recently this has been greatly exacerbated as the terrorist campaign has not only continued but accelerated.

8. Any Joint Declaration following that would be seen either as the product of a "pan-nationalist front" including the terrorists, to which HMG had unwisely acceded (and the language is not inconsistent with this) or as the result of a process of covert negotiation with the Provisionals in which HMG, despite its declared policies, had been indirectly engaged. In either event it would prompt a highly adverse reaction in Northern Ireland itself, notwithstanding the hopes raised elsewhere.

9. Our judgement is that the reaction would be very severe, calling in question confidence in HMG and its fidelity to its stated policies. The terms and overall tone of the Declaration would add credibility to this.



10. The intense, if irrational, fear of betrayal would feed directly into Loyalist terrorism, as well as alienation and disaffection of the Unionist constitutional politicians. Loyalist targetting of uninvolved Catholics, and perceived representatives of the "pan-nationalist front", of which we have seen recent tragic examples, would make it very difficult for the Provisionals to sustain any cessation.

11. There are in any case grounds for scepticism about the Provisionals' own approach. It is inconceivable that a statement of this kind could be made by HMG without including an explicit reference to the constitutional guarantee. That is, for us, a constitutional reality, the basis of our policy in respect of Northern Ireland and a political imperative. And yet we have been told (by the Irish Government) that an explicit reference to this would make the Joint Declaration "unsaleable". There have also been public statements from Adams and others casting doubt on their readiness to accept the principle that Northern Ireland's constitutional status should turn on the wishes of a majority of its people; and on its readiness to bring violence to an end from the outset of a process.

12. We have had to conclude that it would be wrong to proceed. The Taoiseach and I have had however made clear our wish to continue to work together in our own terms on a framework for peace, stability and reconciliation, consistent with our international obligations and our wider responsibilities to both communities. In the first instance we believe this means concentrating on the Talks process. I hope you and the SDLP will continue to make a wholehearted commitment to this.



13. Although our conclusion is that the Joint Declaration would not work in present circumstances, we remain deeply interested in, and committed to, the ending of violence from both sides.

14. Our response to a cessation of PIRA violence, which had been demonstrated, would be positive. As you will know the Taoiseach and I made it clear - and this is the first time it has been said publicly and jointly - that if and when such a renunciation of violence had been made and sufficiently demonstrated new doors could open, and both Governments would wish to respond imaginatively to the new situation which would arise.

15. The tragic events of recent weeks have I believe demonstrated the impossibility of the Provisionals pursuing a peace process, and our responding to it, while the violence continues. Adams himself must have been made aware of the contradictions in his position. It is against that background that the Taoiseach and I decided that it would be helpful to state explicitly and publicly our approach to this matter. We will not bargain with the Provisionals while their campaign continues. But if it is shown to be brought to an end we will wish to respond.

[For use if necessary]

[16. Mr Hume may say that all that is required is for HMG to make it clear that it accepts the principle of Irish self-determination. In response this could be said:

(a) The speculation following your demarche of 25 September, and Adams statement, have made any use of the expression



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"self-determination" sensitive and controversial. But I will consider what you have said.]

[Add if wished:

(b) HMG's position is that:

(i) The future constitutional status of Northern Ireland turns on the wishes of its people, and its position in the UK could only be changed with the consent of a majority of its people;

(ii) but, subject to that, future arrangements for government in Ireland should be determined by the people living there. The British Government's main interest is to facilitate that agreement.]

Public line

17. I hope we can agree on the public line which we should take following this meeting. I propose to say:

"I met Mr Hume today. He did not give me the report on the Hume/Adams dialogue which he had given the Irish government. He explained to me the basis for his view that the Provisional IRA might bring their violent campaign to an end.

"I also made clear that the British Government's approach would be governed by the six principles set out in the Statement the Taoiseach and I issued in Brussels. This includes the principles that there could be no secret agreement or understandings between Government and organisations supporting violence as a price for its cessation, and that those claiming a serious interest in advancing the cause of peace in



Ireland should renounce for good the use of, or support for violence.

"Mr Hume assured me he accepts these principles. I asked him to consider whether further discussion with Adams could, while the violence continues, serve a purpose.

"I urged on Mr Hume the importance of advancing the Talks process involving the two Governments to the main constitutional parties in Northern Ireland."