

PS TO PRIME MINISTER
NO 10 DOWNING ST

CONFIDENTIAL
FM DUBLIN
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 325
OF 051515Z OCTOBER 93
AND TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, BIS NEW YORK

MY TELNO 321: HUME/ADAMS TALKS

SUMMARY

1. HUME LIKELY TO BRIEF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ON 6 OR 7 OCTOBER, BUT THEY HOPE TO PUT OFF PUBLIC COMMENT UNTIL 12 OCTOBER. SUPPORT FOR PURSUING THE INITIATIVE, MAINLY WITHIN FIANNA FAIL BUT ALSO IN THE LABOUR PARTY. OTHERS SCEPTICAL BUT LIKELY TO SWALLOW THEIR DISTASTE SO LONG AS PROSPECTS OF PROGRESS REMAIN. HUME DAMAGED BY HIS HANDLING OF THE EXERCISE, WITH SINN FEIN/PIRA THE WINNERS. SO FAR HMG HAS ESCAPED CRITICISM. IRISH LIKELY TO LOOK FOR POSITIVE ASPECTS OF HUME'S REPORT, WHILE MINIMIZING THE RISK TO HUME AND THEMSELVES. WE SHOULD MAINTAIN OUR PRESENT LINE. IF THE INITIATIVE FAILS, IMPORTANT THE BLAME SHOULD FALL ON PIRA.

DETAIL

2. THE DFA (OHUIGINN) EXPECT THE TAIOSEACH AND THE TANAISTE TO SEE HUME EITHER LATE TOMORROW OR, MORE LIKELY, ON 7 OCTOBER. THEY HOPE TO AVOID SUBSTANTIVE PUBLIC COMMENT UNTIL AFTER THE CABINET HAS CONSIDERED THE MATTER ON 12 OCTOBER. BUT PRESS INTEREST IS INTENSE AND THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD THE LINE. ACCORDING TO OHUIGINN, THEY WILL PROBABLY NOT APPROACH US BEFORE 12 OCTOBER AT THE EARLIEST.

3. THE HUME/ADAMS TALKS CONTINUE TO DOMINATE THE MEDIA AND PRIVATE CONVERSATION HERE. MORE PEOPLE (INCLUDING ONE OR TWO FIANNA FAIL MINISTERS) HAVE COME OUT IN HUME'S DEFENCE, PRINCIPALLY ON THE STRENGTH OF HIS POLITICAL STANDING AND AN UNEASY AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL NATIONALISM WERE HE TO BE DAMAGED. INEVITABLY, MANY ARE ATTRACTED BY THE PROSPECT OF 'PEACE', ESPECIALLY IF IT ENTAILS NO HARD CHOICES FOR THE REPUBLIC. THE GROWING BELIEF THAT THE IRISH AND PERHAPS BRITISH GOVERNMENTS ARE MORE INVOLVED THAN THEY ADMIT HAS RAISED HOPES FURTHER.

4. HOWEVER, OTHERS ARE WARY OF DEALING WITH PIRA BY PROXY, AND ARE SCEPTICAL THAT ANY PRICE CAN BE FOUND WHICH IS BOTH ACCEPTABLE TO UNIONISTS AND SUFFICIENT TO PERSUADE PIRA TO CALL OFF THE ARMED STRUGGLE. THEY DISTRUST HUME WHILE FEARING THE RISKS HE AND THE SDLP ARE RUNNING, AND POINT TO THE DANGERS OF A BREACH BETWEEN NATIONALISTS AND UNIONISTS LEADING TO SECTARIAN VIOLENCE AND THE END OF ANY PROSPECT FOR POLITICAL TALKS. WHILE MOST FIANNA FAIL AND SOME IN THE LABOUR PARTY WOULD SUPPORT TAKING A HUME/ADAMS OUTCOME FURTHER, MANY IN THE ESTABLISHMENT - IN PARTICULAR IN THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, THE BUREAUCRACY, THE GARDA SIOCHANA AND THE ARMY - WOULD FEEL INTENSELY UNCOMFORTABLE AT ANYTHING WHICH SMACKED OF DOING DEALS WITH PIRA. HOWEVER, MY GUESS IS THAT THEY WOULD SWALLOW THEIR DISTASTE SO LONG AS THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS HELD OUT THE PROMISE OF LEADING SOMEWHERE AND HAD THE SUPPORT OF HUME AND THE SDLP.

5. HUME HAS SO FAR LOST CONSIDERABLY FROM THE EXERCISE. THE CONFUSION GENERATED BY HIS RAPID DEPARTURE TO THE UNITED STATES IS SEEN AS BUNGLING, AT BEST, AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE PRIVATELY ANGRY AND EMBARRASSED. IF HIS INITIATIVE IS SEEN TO FAIL, HE WILL BE HARD PUT TO EXTRICATE HIMSELF WITHOUT DAMAGE. THE BIG WINNERS ARE ADAMS AND SINN FEIN/PIRA, WHO HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR STATESMENLIKE, POSITIVE AND EAGER FOR 'PEACE'. (INTER ALIA, THIS CAN ONLY STRENGTHEN CALLS FOR AN END TO THE SECTION 31 BROADCASTING BAN ON SINN FEIN WHEN IT COMES UP FOR RENEWAL IN JANUARY.) THE UNIONISTS ARE YET AGAIN BEING FORCED (WITH SOME SELF-HELP) INTO LOOKING UNREASONABLE AND NEGATIVE. HMG HAVE SO FAR ESCAPED CRITICISM HERE, DESPITE ADAMS' ATTEMPTS AT DISPARAGEMENT.

6. HUME'S RETURN FROM THE UNITED STATES WILL PRESENT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WITH OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS DIFFICULTIES. WHILE THEY WILL WANT TO MINIMIZE THE RISKS TO HUME AND THEMSELVES, THEY ARE LIKELY TO LOOK FOR REASONS FOR OPTIMISM IN HUME'S REPORT - ESPECIALLY THE TAOISEACH, WHO BELIEVES STRONGLY THAT 'PEACE' IS A PREREQUISITE TO POLITICAL PROGRESS OVER NORTHERN IRELAND AND WHOSE INSTINCT WILL BE TO KEEP OPTIONS OPEN. GOVERNMENT SOURCES HAVE ALREADY BEEN HINTING THAT THEY WILL TRY TO USE THE HUME/ADAMS PROCESS TO PRESS FOR AN END TO PIRA'S CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, IT CANNOT BE EXCLUDED THAT, WERE THE PROCESS TO BECOME BOGGED DOWN, REYNOLDS MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO PASS AN EMBARRASSING PARCEL TO HMG, WITH OR WITHOUT HIS OWN ENDORSEMENT, IN ORDER TO REDUCE PRESSURE ON HIS GOVERNMENT AND

THE SDLP.

7. IT IS HARD TO DETECT A WAY THROUGH THESE THICKETS WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT HUME WILL SAY TO THE IRISH. WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT ANY ASPECT OF THIS PROCESS CAN BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL, NOR THAT WHAT THE IRISH MAY EVENTUALLY TELL US WILL ACCURATELY REFLECT HUME OR PIRA. AS SEEN FROM HERE, OUR BEST LINE WILL PROBABLY BE TO MAINTAIN THAT WE WILL CONSIDER WITHOUT COMMITMENT ANY PACKAGE THE IRISH MAY PUT TO US, TO RESTATE OUR POSITION ON UNIFICATION AND CONSENT AND TO STAND FIRM ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NO DEALS WITH PIRA. IF WE CAN LEAVE THE IRISH TO DEAL WITH HUME RATHER THAN BECOME INVOLVED OURSELVES, SO MUCH THE BETTER. BUT IF HUME'S INITIATIVE PROVES ABORTIVE OR GETS BOGGED DOWN, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO ENSURE THAT THE BLAME FALLS ON PIRA, NOT ON HMG OR THE SDLP.

BLATHERWICK

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