

Personal



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SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

M Beeton

Andrew Hunter Esq MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

15 June 1993

I am Andrew:

Thank you for your letter of 27 May about the possibility that you might re-activate your contacts with Sinn Fein.

The Government continues to hold to its frequently expressed view that so long as Sinn Fein endorses violence we will not engage with them as if they were a normal democratic party. (Inevitably Ministers and some Government officials will have direct or indirect contact with elected Sinn Fein representatives in respect of local matters and constituency issues. The way these contacts are handled is a matter of public record.)

The Government does not, however, seek to enforce its view on others. For instance, in relation to the publicity surrounding John Hume's recent meetings with Gerry Adams, I have, if asked, taken the line that John Hume is himself best placed to judge whether or not such meetings are desirable in all the circumstances.

HCC. PS/SOPS (BOL)
PS/MRMATES (BOL)
PS/PUS (BOL)

MR THOMAS
MR RICKARD
MR BROOKER
MR MAY, PAB
MR CAINE
MR D COOKE
SSL/59/93



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Ron Patrick Mayhew QC MP
Secretary of State
Northern Ireland

I note that you envisage that if you renewed your contacts you would do so in a purely private and personal capacity. In reaching your decision you will want to take account of the risk of disclosure. You will also need to form your own judgement on how, if any such contacts became public knowledge, you would defend them in relation to your position as Chairman of the Northern Ireland Backbench Committee. If I had to comment I should need, as always in such circumstances, to make it plain that you were acting without the encouragement or authority of the Government.

I hope this is of some help. If you would like to talk any of this over I should be happy to have a word.

I have duly reflected and decided not to make contact.

Thank you for your comments.

John Finlay
Patrick

Andrew Hunter
Member of Parliament, Basingstoke

→ cc. Ps/Sgs (11)
Ps/Pac (L23)
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Parnell
Mr. Coughlin
Mr. May