

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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Copy No ... of 5

FROM: D G McNEILL, PAB  
DATE: 28 JANUARY 1991

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N.I.O. LONDON

PS/Secretary of State (B&L) [1&2] - B

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File [5]

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POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND PROVISIONALS: JOHN HUME

1. I met John Hume on 25 January 1991 and passed to him a copy of the Secretary of State's statement of the 24 December 1990 made in the wake of PIRA's announcement of the Christmas ceasefire.
2. I also passed to him a copy of the Secretary of State's comments made to the media on 22 January 1991. I drew Hume's attention specifically to
  - (i) The Secretary of State's comment that during 1990 progress had been made in settling age old disputes and his hope that during 1991 there would be a possibility of (settling the dispute in Northern Ireland).
  - (ii) The Secretary of State's answer to a question which linked "private contacts" - "so long as violence continues" - and "had nothing directly to say".
  - (iii) The exchange which linked a place for Sinn Fein at the Conference table to a renunciation of violence.
3. Hume thought that these comments were helpful and said that he would pass them on to his contacts on 25 January 1991.
4. He said that he had heard a further discussion with Charles Haughey on 24 January 1991 and had urged him to maintain the momentum on this front. Haughey had told Hume that he was to meet the Secretary of State on Thursday 31 January when the Secretary of State was in Dublin for the Conference.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Page No 1 of 3

SECRET AND PERSONAL

5. Hume said that Haughey intended to take soundings from the Secretary of State on a strategy which could start with a Joint Declaration by both HMG and the Republic of Ireland Government. This Declaration - which has been mentioned before - might draw on the changes in Eastern Europe, on the possibilities for shifting away from narrow self-centered nationalism which could come with the advent of the changes inherent in the Single European Market and the Declaration might also indicate that both Governments saw the future for stability in Northern Ireland, between NI and the rest of Ireland and between Britain and Ireland as being built on/encouraged by a policy linked to a greater degree of unity of the peoples in Ireland.

[Signed]

6. Hume said that linked with this Haughey would call a new nationalist forum which could provide the impetus for PIRA to call an end to the armed struggle with a guarantee for a place at such a conference table for Sinn Fein. The intention would be that the Joint Declaration and the "Forum" would be linked privately by the Republic of Ireland but not publicly, initially at least. Hume said that Haughey intends to raise the prospects of such a Joint Declaration with the Secretary of State, but he does not know whether he will raise the concept of a new nationalist forum.

7. Hume said that he was reporting Haughey's intentions to me to relay to the Secretary of State on the basis that the Secretary of State should not indicate to Haughey that Hume had done so.

8. Hume is still concerned that action on the political talks process might jeopardise the prospects of a ceasefire. He said that Dermot Gallagher considered that both processes could be linked by allowing Sinn Fein to sit on the political talks if they did not start too soon and if violence were to end. Hume was not convinced that that was feasible. He said that unionists might not be able to accept the concept of Sinn Fein at the Conference table within such a short time of violence ceasing.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Page No 2 of 3

SECRET AND PERSONAL

9. On a final point I asked Hume if he thought that Adams was running too far ahead of the republican movement. Hume said that he did not think so but he could not guarantee that Adams could deliver. He thought however that Adams was careful not to isolate himself. He confirmed that McGuinness was in agreement with Adams at present. He said that Adams had told Hume that he should feel free to use the Derry channel if the direct Adams channel was not available to Hume for some reason.

10. Hume has gone to the USA until the 9 February and hopes that when he returns he may have a substantive proposals that he can put to Adams.

[Signed]

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PS. I spoke to Hume on 26 January 1991. He had not had a chance to pass on the two pieces of paper mentioned earlier. He will do so in Dublin to a messenger on Sunday 27 January. He will not get any feedback from this messenger.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Page No 3 of 3

25 JANUARY 1991

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