



An Chartlann Náisiúnta **National Archives**

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*in h. [unclear]
[unclear]
9.10.90*

SECRET

for Sinn Féin file

*with Hume
(see [unclear] 1.7
[unclear] 9/10)*

*Taoreach
to see please
[unclear]
8/10*

Discussion with John Hume

Hume-Adams Talks

1. In a discussion last Saturday, John Hume told me that he had a further approach in the past week from the intermediary who organises the meetings between Gerry Adams and himself; in this approach, the intermediary had asked if the paper Hume had promised to the Sinn Féin leader some time ago had yet been prepared. (It will be recalled - see my report of 10 September - that Hume, in his last meeting with Adams, had argued in favour of an alternative approach by the Provisionals: specifically that they would lay down their arms in return for a request from the SDLP to the Government to call a conference of all parties (including Sinn Féin) on the island; presuming the Unionists would not attend, this conference would become a forum where all the nationalist parties would work out a common plan/strategy on the basis of which they would seek to convince Unionists of the value of a united Ireland. In response to this suggestion by Hume, Adams asked that Hume let him have a private paper which he would then put to the IRA).
2. Hume, in reply to the intermediary, said that he had taken the view that Adams' request for a private paper had now become academic in the light of a recent interview with an IRA spokesman in the London Independent. In this interview the spokesman had said: "We can state absolutely, on the record, that there will be no ceasefire, no truce, no cessation of violence short of a British withdrawal. That, as blunt as that, is our position." (However the spokesman went on to qualify the position somewhat by saying that "should the British Government at any stage genuinely seek dialogue, then we are more than willing to engage in dialogue with them").


3. The intermediary responded quite strongly to Hume's interpretation of the interview and said that the position had not in any way been changed by it; that there was still the same "pliability" on the part of Adams as had been conveyed to Hume at the time the request for the private paper had been made.

Possible Statement by Secretary of State

4. Hume also mentioned that he had been told by his NIO contact (John McConnell) that the text of the statement the SDLP leader had been suggesting for some time might be made by the Secretary of State - in which Mr. Brooke would emphasise that the British had no longer any vested economic, social, strategic or military interest in staying in Northern Ireland - was now close to being finalised. (It will be recalled that Ambassador Fenn had made a speech along these lines at the recent Magill Summer School - it is by no means clear, however, that the Secretary of State would wish to go on record in the same terms himself).

Meeting between Senior Northern Official and Adams

5. Finally, Hume told me that he had been advised in private by Gerry Loughren, an Under-Secretary at the Department of the Environment in Belfast (who originally comes from West Belfast and whose wife was an active member of the SDLP at one time), that he had been instructed recently to brief Gerry Adams on the NIO's economic plans and programmes for West Belfast. Hume specifically asked that we not let the British know we were aware of this meeting, as it could compromise Loughren. Hume said he was taken aback at the meeting and saw it as a further proof that the British were "not to be trusted".


Dermot Gallagher
4 October, 1990