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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

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Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
SW1

Dear Michael

MEETING WITH MR JOHN HUME

I attach a brief for tomorrow's meeting.

Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins
M W HOPKINS

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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR JOHN HUME, MEP: THURSDAY 13 MAY 1980

A background note on Mr Hume and his Party is attached at Annex A. Mr Hume has taken up the long-standing invitation originally extended to Gerry Fitt (as his predecessor as leader of the SDLP) to a meeting on security with the Prime Minister to match others which she has had with Northern Ireland political leaders.

2. The meeting is nominally about security. Mr Hume's Party are against violence and against the IRA. But they are ambivalent in their attitude towards the Security Forces arguing that they cannot speak out in support of the Security Forces until the Catholic community have a role in government. They need to be tackled on this. A speaking note is at Annex B. The SDLP have a number of bees in their bonnets about security, some of which ^{may} fly out when Mr Hume sees the Prime Minister. A defensive speaking note is at Annex C.

3. Mr Hume's request for a meeting comes - not by accident - shortly before the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr Haughey and at a time when the Government's proposals for the future government of Northern Ireland are being worked up. Mr Hume will certainly wish to raise political matters. He is likely to concentrate on 3 points:-

- (i) The Constitutional Guarantee - the SDLP, and Mr Hume in particular, have consistently pressed that HMG should withdraw the guarantee whereby Northern Ireland remains a part of the UK for as long as the majority so wish, or alternatively that HMG should at least declare an "interest in Irish unity". (The guarantee is alleged to give the Unionists a sense of security, lessening the incentive to come to terms with the minority community.)

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- (ii) Power-sharing - throughout the Constitutional Conference the SDLP have maintained that no government can work in Northern Ireland unless the minority community are guaranteed a share in the exercise of power (which to them means seats at the top table). They say that they will have nothing to do with any system of government based on majority rule.
- (iii) Local government - the SDLP will also reject any attempt to strengthen the powers of local government. There are two main reasons for this:
- (a) They want power-sharing in a provincial government to guard themselves against acts of sectarian discrimination; and by the same token they would oppose giving majority-rule local councils enhanced powers (eg housing, education, planning) for fear that they too would be abused.
- (b) The distribution of Catholics in the Province does not make it possible to construct local government areas in such a way as to produce a reasonable proportion of areas in which the minority in the community would command power.
- (iv) Most of Mr Hume's Party now accept that an institutionalised Irish dimension (eg a "Council of Ireland" in the Sunningdale sense) cannot be created in the near future. But if they do not get a power sharing regime in the North they will "play the Dublin card", ie they will insist that the role of the Irish Government is crucial to any

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settlement. Hume is likely to develop these ideas to the Prime Minister. At his last meeting with the Secretary of State on 18 April he said that HMG needed to take into consideration:

- 1) relationships between the people of Northern Ireland;
- 2) relationships between the people of the North and South of Ireland;
- 3) relationships between GB and Ireland.

4. The SDLP have very close links with Dublin (both with Fianna Fail and Fine Gael) and claim to be able to control Irish policy on Northern Ireland. Hume does not like Mr Haughey but has developed a respect for him as Taoiseach. He will undoubtedly give a detailed account of his meeting with the Prime Minister to Mr Haughey in preparation for the Taoiseach's own meeting with her.

5. The Prime Minister will wish to make it clear that any future arrangements for the government of Northern Ireland will take full account of the interests of the minority, but that there can be no question of the Government of the Republic having any say in the formulation of those arrangements. A speaking note is attached at Annex D.

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BACKGROUND NOTE

John Hume

John Hume was born (1937) and received his schooling in Londonderry; his home today is on the edge of the Bogside. He graduated from St Patrick's College, Maynooth in French and Modern History, and entered the teaching profession. Hume's involvement in public life began through his holding office in the Credit Union Movement; he was President of the Credit League of Ireland from 1964-69. He was a prominent figure in the civil rights movement and became a Stormont MP in 1968; with 5 other opposition members, he formed the SDLP in 1970 and became its Deputy Leader in 1973. Elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1973, John Hume became Minister of Commerce during the short-lived power sharing Executive (at which time his Permanent Secretary was Ewart Bell, now Head of the NI Civil Service, whom the Prime Minister has met). Following the Constitutional Convention in 1975-76, on which he represented Londonderry, he was granted a visiting research fellowship at Trinity College, Dublin and was an associate fellow of international affairs at Harvard. In 1978 he joined the cabinet of Edmund Burke, the Irish Commissioner at Brussels. In 1979 he was elected a Member of the European Parliament. He became leader of the SDLP in December 1979 on the resignation of Gerry Fitt MP from the Party.

2. In common with many of his colleagues in the SDLP from outside Belfast, John Hume leans towards the nationalist wing of the Party. However, he is moderate in approach and recognises the need to maintain a dialogue with the Unionists; he unreservedly condemns the activities of the IRA. His experience in the power-sharing Executive, when he was a most able Minister, confirmed his belief in the ability of the two communities to work together in Government. He blames the failure of the power-sharing experiment on the weakness

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of the British Government which, he felt, could have done more to support the embryo administration during the events leading up to the Ulster Workers Council strike. He has a romantic view of Irish history and Irish identity and firmly believes that the British and Irish Governments will have to play a strong and decisive role in resolving the political impasse in Northern Ireland. He has from time to time expressed doubts about their resolve to do so. In a recent article in Foreign Affairs Magazine he wrote "London, for its part, exercises a reluctant sovereignty in Northern Ireland, while Dublin maintains a somewhat reluctant claim to that sovereignty". He does not believe that an internal settlement within Northern Ireland can be more than a step on the road to Irish unity. Although very much a Derry man, Hume is also a committed internationalist, seeing lessons for Ireland in world history and believing it important to harness world opinion on the Irish question. He has built up a particularly close relationship with US politicians, while recognising that there are those in the United States who are not an influence for good. He also regards the European Economic Community as providing a broadening influence, giving the people of Ireland a chance to look beyond their internal squabbles.

The SDLP

3. The SDLP was founded in 1970 as a secular Party designed to attract members from both communities. In practice it has become the largest Catholic party, though it still keeps its distance from the Church.

The Party represents a wide spectrum of nationalist views, though since the departure of Gerry Fitt it is dominated by the rural and Derry faction, and does not contain many influential members from Belfast. It has always been and still remains a fragile coalition and the Party leaders including Hume are conscious of the need to

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convince their electorate that they can deliver a settlement favourable to the Catholic community by constitutional means. The SDLP have been an important factor in wooing the Catholic community as a whole away from the violent tactics of the PIRA. John Hume is the undisputed leader of the Party who recognises that his international reputation is one of their great assets. He is unlikely to be challenged. He has however to reconcile the differing views of his membership on how fast to proceed towards their agreed aim of Irish unity. The danger he has to guard against is that the Party could split if it is seen to fail, and that the more extreme members could become more sympathetic to PIRA.

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ANNEX B

SECURITY

Points to make

1. You and your colleagues sometimes criticise certain aspects of security policy in Northern Ireland: you reflect publicly the traditional apprehension felt by many of those whom you represent about the RUC and the Army. This is your privilege. But time has moved forward, and you have a responsibility to contribute positively to all the efforts which are being made to protect ordinary people and to bring to justice those who bomb and kill.
2. The Government's security policy is non-discriminatory. We are against all terrorists, whatever political beliefs - Republicanism or Loyalism - they may (sometimes cynically) profess. We want to stop violence so that both Catholics and Protestants can live normal lives free from fear.
3. The RUC and the Army conduct security operations in such a way as to minimize disruption and inconvenience to law-abiding people. They are selective, patiently building up through investigation and intelligence, an accurate picture of whomsoever or whatever they want to apprehend. As the capture of the men in the Antrim Road on 2 May showed, they do not want unnecessary bloodshed.
4. We are determined that the RUC should continue to take full responsibility for policing duties throughout the Province. Much has been done to make the force acceptable to Catholics; this is bound to be a gradual process but I hope you share my satisfaction at what has already been achieved.

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DEFENSIVE SPEAKING NOTES: SECURITYEmergency Provisions Act gives Security Forces extreme powers

The powers given by the Act are the minimum needed in the circumstances in Northern Ireland. They are brought before Parliament for review every six months. This is not a ritual; we look carefully for ways in which we can relax them.

Ill-treatment of suspects during interrogation by Police

The Government and the Chief Constable condemn absolutely any ill-treatment of suspects. We have implemented all the Bennett recommendations for supervising interviews. We will not be brow-beaten by propaganda, but we are determined to do all that can be done to ensure there is no ill-treatment.

Investigation of allegations of RUC misbehaviour

The RUC are not above the law. The DPP (who is answerable to the Attorney General, not to the Chief Constable) considers scrupulously all cases in which a criminal offence is alleged. The Chief Constable's attitude to alleged breaches of discipline is no less rigorous. I am quite satisfied that we do not need an independent tribunal.

Government should make first move in H-Block protest

Can well understand concern at conditions, but these are entirely self-inflicted. The prisoners in the H-Blocks have been provided with excellent facilities but have chosen to defile them. In order to give the prisoners concerned more opportunity for contacts with their families and friends, the disciplinary awards against them have been adjusted to allow two visits a month instead of one visit a month; and to allow a prisoner to write and receive one letter a week instead of one a month. They are also permitted to take their daily exercise period in PT kit. None of those on the "dirty" protest have taken advantage of any of these measures.

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RUC and UDR are recruited almost entirely from majority community

Anyone who meets the entry requirements is welcome to join, irrespective of where they live, or their religion or lack of it. But face fact that Catholics from some areas need considerable courage. Own neighbours and political representatives need to encourage and support potential recruits.

Security problems should be tackled in co-operation with the Government in the Republic

Agree completely. Good deal of progress made since last Autumn (meeting with Mr Lynch). Encouraging signs that Garda and RUC are working together more and more closely. But to trumpet it to the world would be counter-productive; results - arms finds, arrests - are clear enough proof.

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SPEAKING NOTE ON POLITICS

Pleased that the SDLP participated in the Conference. Valuable first step on road to a political settlement. HMG now formulating their proposals for further discussion. HMG wish to consult widely, but given the facts of political life in NI, there can be no imposed solution. A local administration in the North no obstacle to ultimate Irish unity if that were what the people wanted; but at the moment it is not what the majority want.

Points to make:

1. Guarantee: there can be no question of change; it would make things more difficult by infuriating Unionists; and a change would not be consistent with the principle that the present constitutional position of Northern Ireland remains unaltered as long as that is the wish of the majority.
2. Declaration of interest by HMG in eventual Irish unity: not on; counter-productive because it would alienate the majority in Northern Ireland.
3. Dublin's role: recognise that they have a natural interest; but must be very careful not to concede that they have any role in the negotiation of Northern Ireland's future.
4. Wider relationships: what does Hume mean exactly? The setting up of acceptable institutions for a local administration in Northern Ireland would be the essential first step to progress on a wider front.
5. Long-term future: HMG accepts and will defend the choice of the Northern Ireland people.

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