

The Prime Minister agreed to see
Mr Hume this week.

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MR. WHITMORE

John Hume

Mr. Hume telephoned at 6.15 p.m. this evening.

He said that there had been some kind of confusion in Belfast over the weekend. On Friday he had made through the NIO a formal request for a meeting with the Prime Minister, following the channels he had used before. He had now been advised today by the NIO that he should approach the Prime Minister's office direct, which he was doing through this telephone call.

I asked Mr. Hume what he specifically wished to discuss with the Prime Minister. He said simply that the situation in Northern Ireland was now critical, and there was very little time left. When he made his request on Friday he had been hoping to see the Prime Minister on Tuesday. He would still be ready to do so, late in the evening if necessary.

I told him that the Prime Minister was with Chancellor Schmidt at Chequers, and would be there until tomorrow. I said that the rest of her programme for tomorrow was very tight, and that I could only convey his request to her. I promised him that we would give him a reply as soon as possible, although it would certainly not be tonight.

I have not gone back to the NIO about this, following the conversation which I reported to you earlier. May we leave it to you to get the Prime Minister's reaction?

M.A. PATTISON

11 May 1981