

CEP/STH

Text of letter dated 5 February, 1986 to the Rt. Hon.
Margaret Thatcher, MP from Mr. John Hume MP, M.E.P.,
Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party

Dear Prime Minister

I understand that you are due to meet the leaders of the Unionist Parties in the near future. There have been some calls recently for "gestures" towards them from the SDLP. Apart from the fact that I do not believe that they are the sort of people who would appreciate "gestures" from ourselves, I do not believe at the moment that they are listening seriously to anyone and in their present mood would be likely to reject any offer, thereby making dialogue more difficult in the future when they pass through the present phase.

However, I think it important that you should be aware of our position on the two areas where there appears to be some concern. The SDLP are willing to enter into discussions with the Unionists on devolution or any matter that pertains to peace and stability and having reached agreement with them on the form of devolution, to go then to the electorate in an election to a new assembly and put the devolution agreement before them. I am sure that you will appreciate the strength of such a position if for the first time we have a united approach to the electorate.

Secondly, the SDLP believe that the Anglo-Irish Agreement creates for the first time the framework of equality in which a genuine process of reconciliation can begin. We believe that in practice this means that there must be a willingness on our part and on the part of the people that we represent to play the fullest possible part in all aspects of life in Northern Ireland and in all institutions.

In particular we want to play the fullest possible part in the institutions of law and order. The Agreement provides for rapid progress in this area and we look forward to such progress.

In our view it is only by such a reconciliation process and by working together to build our community, that we will ever break down the barriers of prejudice, hatred and distrust that have disfigured this part of Ireland for so long. The building of trust born of working together as equals is in our view the only way to diminish the distrust and prejudices of centuries.

I would, of course, like to meet you myself in the near future to elaborate in more details on our position but in the meantime I thought that you might find the above of some value in advance of your meeting with the Unionists.

Yours sincerely

John Hume

CEPJA

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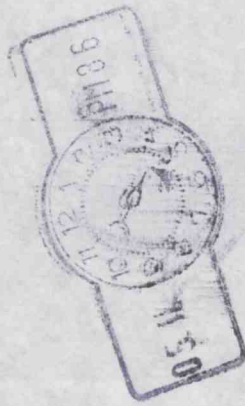
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Yours sincerely

John Hume



no
MBASÁID NA hÉIREANN, LONDAIN



IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

CE RWA

5 February 1986

Dear Private Secretary,

As I explained to you on the telephone, I am sending to you herewith a letter which Mr. John Hume MP, MEP, the Leader of the SDLP has addressed to the Prime Minister and which he has asked to have forwarded on his behalf.

As I explained, Mr. Hume is at present in Manila with an international observer group who are monitoring the Philippine elections and he does not expect to be back in Europe for some little time. In these circumstances, my authorities have agreed, at his request, to use our communications facilities to transmit the text of the letter to the Prime Minister on his behalf.

Yours sincerely,

Cliona Manahan-Leslie.

The Private Secretary to the Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London.



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CERTA.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 February 1986

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Mr. John Hume, M.P. received via the Irish Embassy. I understand that Mr. Hume is in Manila as part of a group monitoring the Philippine Elections.

BF | I should be grateful for an early draft reply which would end by offering Mr. Hume an appointment to see the Prime Minister after her meeting with the Unionist Leaders on 25 February.

(C.D. Powell)

Jim Daniell, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office

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