

11 SEP 1998  
10:45 AM

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

0026/491

Desk Immediate

- cc PS | S&S (L+S)
- PS | Mr. Murphy (L+S)
- PS | Mr. Ingram (L+S)
- PS | PUS (L+S)

From the Principal Private Secretary

OM

OM

2/5

17/9

a Mr McEustace

10 September 1998

PS | Mr. Seale

Mr. Walker

Mr. Jeffrey

Mr. Stephens

Mr. [unclear]

Mr. Hill

Mr. Brooker

Mr. Wamer

Dee Ida,

TRIMBLE/ADAMS MEETING, 10 SEPTEMBER

I have had a read-out from both sides of this meeting. Siobhan O'Hanlon rang to pass on Adam's impressions. It had been a good meeting, lasting some 40 minutes. There had been a positive engagement on both sides, focussed on the real issues. Both men had made their respective positions and difficulties clear. Adams had raised decommissioning himself and set out his position, and Trimble had responded to that. Overall, Adams was very pleased with the meeting. He and Trimble planned another meeting next week, but this time privately.

David Trimble's account was remarkably similar. He had not really intended to give Adams so much time, but in the end they had been together for 35 minutes. The atmosphere had been good and businesslike. On decommissioning, Adams had told him that at the moment he could not deliver on this, but had gone on to say that he hoped McGuinness and de Chastelain, together with Trimble and himself, could work something out. Trimble had been encouraged by this. Overall, Trimble thought the meeting had gone as well as it could have done, and he was pleased by the press presentation. No one in his Assembly party seemed to be making a fuss. He did not yet have the wider party reaction, but he was not expecting any trouble. He confirmed that he and Adams were planning a private meeting next week, though nothing had yet been definitely fixed.

Comment

It is hard not to agree with Trimble that this seems to have gone off as well as we could have hoped. The Irish have also had positive feedback from Sinn Fein. We should obviously protect the likelihood of a further private meeting.

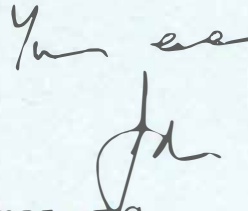
CONFIDENTIAL

*CONFIDENTIAL*

- 2 -

Trimble incidentally told me, and said that he had told Adams, that he could not accept the proposed interim Standing Orders for the Assembly, since they implied too much automaticity about formation of the Executive once the departments and number of Ministers were agreed. This automaticity could drive him to resignation if he was not ready for it. He said he had written to Dr Mowlam to set this out.

I am copying this letter to John Grant (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Sebastian Wood (Cabinet Office), Sir Christopher Meyer (Washington) and to Veronica Sutherland (Dublin) - the last two by fax.

**JOHN HOLMES**

John McKervill Esq  
Northern Ireland Office

*CONFIDENTIAL*