

PST: PSS; Ministers Owen,  
de Rossa & Taylor; Attorney  
General; Minister of State  
Covey; Messrs. Teahon,  
Donlon & Dalton; Amb.  
London and Washington; Joint  
Secretary; Counsellors A-I.

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To: HQ

From: Belfast

For: Second Secretary O hUiginn

From: Joint Secretary

Subj: Contacts in Castle Buildings

COPY TO:

MR. O'DONNELL  
MR. HICKEY  
MR. BROSAN  
MR. FAY  
MR. CALLAGHAN  
MR. ROUGHNEEN

1. I gather from Frank Feely, whom I met during a visit to Castle Buildings today, that the SDLP (Feely and Donovan McClelland) have had some informal contact with the UUP delegation there over the past week (Reg Empey, Jeffrey Donaldson and some others).
2. This included a bilateral this morning at which Empey underlined his own desire to avoid a confrontation next week over the decommissioning issue but worried about pressure which was coming through on this subject from both David Trimble and John Taylor.
3. Empey indicated some appreciation for the difficulties created for the SDLP vis-a-vis Sinn Féin in the wake of Drumcree and the effect this would have on their attitude towards the handling of decommissioning at the talks.
4. He also made clear that he would personally favour taking no action on the question of possible breaches of the Mitchell principles by the Loyalist parties.
5. The UUP have requested a more formal meeting with the SDLP (Hume and Mallon) to prepare for next week's resumption. Feely thought it likely that, diary commitments permitting, Hume would agree to a meeting.
6. The DUP (Paisley, Robinson and Campbell) have been regular attenders in Castle Buildings during the August recess but have kept entirely to themselves. The UUP and the NIWC have also been present throughout but the Loyalist parties and Labour have only appeared sporadically. Alliance and the UKUP have not appeared at all.

TUE 17:37 FAX

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7. The Chairman's office has confirmed that no additional papers were circulated during August.
8. For your information, General De Chastelain will be back in Castle Buildings on Friday. Senator Mitchell, Mr Holkeri and the various staffers return on Sunday.