

**Secure Fax: 886****3 September 1996****No of pages including this one: 2****To: HQ****From: Belfast****For: Second Secretary O hUiginn****From: Joint Secretary****Subj: Contacts in Castle Buildings**

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.



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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.

TO: HQ  
 FROM: Second Secretary O'Halloran

FROM: Dublin  
 FROM: John Secretary

Encl. - Staffing of Irish Government delegation office during recess

1. You will have seen the note agreed between both Governments which is being circulated in all delegations at Castle Buildings today (a copy of which was forwarded to us by Patricia Williams yesterday).
2. To fulfil the commitment given in para 5 about the availability of representatives of the two Governments, our delegation office will be manned by staff of the Secretariat between the agreed hours (9-5pm) on each of the days in question (5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 26-27 August and 2-3 September). A roster is being drawn up under Mr Dowling's guidance which will involve, at different times, Mr Dowling, Mr Nolan, Mr Tierney and Mr O'Shea.
3. I understand that the British Government office is likely to be manned for some of the time by Alan Whyte of the Talks Unit.
4. Bronagh Hinds, with whom I had a conversation yesterday, expects that the two Loyalist parties, her own NIWC and "one or two" of the Unionist parties will be present at Castle Buildings during August, though on a somewhat sporadic basis. The SDLP and Alliance have told her that they will not be and she suspects that Labour will also be absent.
5. The NIWC hope to use the Monday/Tuesday period of each week to do a number of things. First, they want to consolidate their relations with the two Loyalist parties. Second, they want to try to "reach out" to the Unionist parties, with whom relations have been fairly strained from the outset of these talks. Third, they want to