

9 Sep. 1997 13.55
To: NO. 10

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No. 3561 P. 1/3

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FROM: D J R HILL
CONSTITUTIONAL & POLITICAL DIVISION
9 SEPTEMBER 1997

File for 10/9
cc Press

cc: (see attached)

PS/Mr Murphy (L&B)

SENATOR MITCHELL AND THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF STRAND TWO

As I reported yesterday, I had a meeting with Martha Pope yesterday afternoon to discuss the basis on which Senator Mitchell might chair strand two of the negotiations.

2.

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This, she added, "came right from Sandy Berger".

[Comment: the term "deputise" appears in the draft procedural motion we gave the Irish last Thursday and may have been used in the previous exchanges between No 10 and the Taoiseach's office - either way it looks as if the Irish have wound up the Americans.]

3. I explained that no-one on the British side undervalued Senator Mitchell or would wish to imply that he was not the senior Independent Chairman. The proposal to "fudge" the Chairmanship arrangements in order to leave Senator Mitchell as de facto Chairman of strand two (which had been suggested by Trimble) represented an attempt to find an imaginative way round an obstacle to progress. For our part, we saw General de Chastelain as the ideal Chairman of the

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Independent Commission and Senator Mitchell as the appropriate person to chair strand two.

4. Martha Pope confirmed that the Senator also saw General de Chastelain as best suited to chairing the Independent Commission; and that he was himself ready to chair strand two.

5. This was a perfectly amicable conversation but the message unmistakably clear.

David Hill

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SENATOR MITCHELL & THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF STRAND TWO

cc: PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Murphy (L&B)
PS/Mr Ingram (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Thomas
Mr Steele
Mr Watkins
Mr Leach
Mr Bell
Mr Stephens
Mr Lavery
Mr Perry
Mr Maccabe
Mr Beeton
Mr Brooker
Mr Priestly
Mr Woods (L&B)
Mr Whysall (L&B)
Ms Mapstone
Ms Bharucha
Mr Fergusson, RID
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