

## AHERN

- Concerned about defused bomb. Probably Republican Sinn Fein or INLA, but still bad for confidence.
- Also bound to be worries about IRA connivance.
- Otherwise relatively pleased with situation. Still very keen to preserve multi-party process if possible.
- Trimble seems to be looking to stay in the process, but fragile and he still needs something.
- Will not press you on exact forms of words now, but need something on actual decommissioning and on consent (moving Trimble towards emphasis on latter).
- Disappointed that you were unwilling to set up Independent Commission now. Reinforces UUP prejudice that you are not only not interested in decommissioning, but actually hostile.
- Will be in touch about all this again in late August (n.b. decision on Sinn Fein's talks invitation by 31 August).
- Will need to be in touch about choreography of talks in September.
- [If raised] Hope de Chastelain can be confirmed as chairman of Independent Commission, but Unionists not happy about Mitchell taking on Strand 2 (North-South). Will have to reflect.

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