

18/07/97 23:30
BRITISH EMBASSY WASHINGTON

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British Embassy
Washington

3100 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington D.C. 20008-3600

Telephone: (202) 588 6532
Facsimile: (202) 588 7859

by fax

18 July 1997

David Brooker Esq
NIO(L)

Top - JEM
cc PR
LAC
Faxed to JEM
at home 19/7
- file

Dear David,

DECOMMISSIONING: MARTHA POPE

1. I asked Martha Pope how she now saw things, and how Mitchell thought things should be orchestrated on 23 July.
2. Martha (who had the radio going at full volume with rumours of an imminent IRA cease-fire) said that the big question was whether Mr Trimble was seeking a way to stay in the talks process, or an excuse to walk out. She thought that I might have a better feel for this than she did. I said we should at least proceed on the assumption that the UUP wanted to stay in, and work to achieve that. Did Senator Mitchell think he might be able to contribute? He had offered a helpful clarification on the Frost Programme the other day. Martha thought Mitchell might not want to be pinned too firmly to what he had said on TV. It would do no good, in any case, if it merely provoked an angry response from Dublin. I agreed. It was absolutely essential that London and Dublin stayed together. Emphasising that I was speaking on my own authority, however, I wondered whether we were making enough use of Mitchell's stature, and the credibility he carried with all sides. Could he, perhaps, play a more active role by making a declaration (pre-cooked with the two Governments) to clarify the intention of his Report? He could explain, for example, that it established a mechanism which would deliver actual decommissioning as and when the Independent Chairmen judged this necessary in order to maintain confidence and momentum towards agreement. It would be as unreasonable to demand actual decommissioning as a pre-condition for negotiation as it would be unreasonable to suppose that actual decommissioning could be left to the end of the process.

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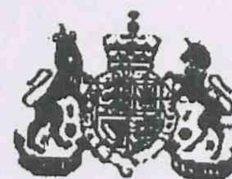
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3. Martha Pope thought that Mitchell might indeed be ready to say something along these lines provided that both Governments requested it. She had no doubt he would cooperate in any way that the two Governments wanted. But timing was all. She did not know how David Trimble would react if there was indeed an IRA cease-fire in the near future, and if Sinn Fein at once marched into offices in Castle Buildings. She said that she would be around all weekend, and that Senator Mitchell arrived on Sunday night, if we wanted to sound him out.

yours ever,

Anthony

Anthony Cary

cc: PS/SOSNI
PS/Mr Murphy
Mr Holmes, No 10
Mr Lamont, RID, FCO
Mr MacCabe, NIO(B)
Mr Clarke, Dublin
Mr Reid BIS, NY

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