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CABINET OFFICE
N 11235
11.11.1997
FILE INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

FROM: JOHN MILLS
 SECURITY POLICY AND OPERATIONS DIVISION
 18 NOVEMBER 1997

DESK IMMEDIATE

cc PS/Secretary of State (B&L) - e
 PS/Mr Murphy (B & L) - e
 PS/PUS (B & L) - e
 PS/Mr Semple - e
 Mr Steele - e
 Mr Thomas - e
 Mr Bell - e
 Mr Ray - e
 Mr Watkins - e
 Mr Stephens - e
 Mr Perry - e
 Mr Hill - e
 Mr Maccabe - e
 Mr Brooker - e
 Mr Woods (B&L) - e
 Mr Margetts - e
 Mrs Todd - e
 Mr Whysall - e
 Mr Fergusson, RID
 Mr Carter, HOLAB - e
 Mr Sanderson, CO
 HMA Dublin

a Mr Holmes (in case this has not reached you from NIO)

ng
18/11

1. Mr Leach [I agree. It is important that this note be passed to the Minister, and to No 10, as soon as possible. sgd SJL 18.11.97]
2. PS/Mr Ingram (B&L) - e

DECOMMISSIONING: ACCUSATIONS OF DELAY IN ISSUING COMMISSION'S REPORT

This is to provide advice on an article in today's "Financial Times" which suggests that the two Governments are attempting to side line the decommissioning issue. The Prime Minister meets Mr Trimble today and Mr Ingram will be taking Second

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Reading of the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Bill where the matter could be raised. It might, therefore, be helpful if this minute could be passed on urgently to the Prime Minister's office and to Mr Ingram.

2. The article in the Financial Times argues that the two Governments are trying to prevent the Commission from pressing ahead with its Initial Report citing the fact the Report was not tabled at yesterday's meeting of the Liaison Sub-Committee on Decommissioning as evidence of this. The Article refers to the Report providing "a road map on how arms might be decommissioned" - an expression which appears in the Report.
3. The two Governments received the Report on 28 October and suggested major revisions. The text was finalised yesterday subject to any major difficulties being raised by Sinn Fein and the loyalist parties which the Commission intended to meet either today or tomorrow.
4. At yesterday's Liaison Sub-Committee meeting Mr Maginnis and the Alliance Party expressed disappointment that the Report was not available. In part the problem was caused by a failure of communication between the Decommissioning Commission and the office of the Independent Chairman about what was to be discussed in the Sub-Committee and, despite attempts to inform the Chairman that the Report would not be available, the participants were not forewarned (this could be explained in private to Mr Trimble).
5. We understand that the Commission should be able to circulate its Report by 24 November, or even earlier, and the Liaison Sub-Committee may be able to discuss it as early as 25 November, subject to the availability of Prime Minister Holkeri (Senator Mitchell's deputy) to chair proceedings.

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6. Lines to take which emphasise that the Governments remain fully committed to decommissioning and stress that the Report and its distribution are the responsibility of the Decommissioning Commission are attached for consideration.

[sgd]

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