

FROM: ANITA BHARUCHA  
IPL  
13 NOVEMBER 1996

cc PS/Michael Ancram (L,B&DENI) - B/Fax  
PS/Sir John Wheeler (L,B&DFP) - B/Fax  
PS/Baroness Denton (L,DANI&DED) - B/Fax  
PS/PUS (L&B) - B  
PS/Sir David Fell - B  
Mr Thomas - B  
Mr Watkins - B  
Mr Bell - B  
Mr Ray - B  
Mr Wood (L&B) - B  
Mr Hill - B  
Mr Beeton - B  
Mr Lavery - B  
Mr Lamont, RID - B  
Ms Mapstone - B  
Ms Jude - B  
Mrs Sear - B  
Mr Brearley - B  
HMA Dublin - B  
Mr Westmacott - Fax  
Mr Reid, BIS - Fax  
Ms Collins, Cabinet Office - Fax  
Mr Oakden, No 10 - ~~Fax~~  
Mr Campbell Bannerman - B

1. MR STEPHENS - B (As amended. JAS 13/11)  
2. PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B) - B

#### CONTACT BETWEEN INDEPENDENT CHAIRMEN/STAFF AND SINN FEIN

Some of the participants in the talks have raised questions about possible contacts between the staff of the Independent Chairmen and Sinn Fein. More recently, Dr Paisley has repeated these allegations adding that the Secretary of State has a security report which indicates that there has been contact. I attach lines to take, which may be useful for TOPS tomorrow and the talks next week; I have also copied this to Baroness Denton for use in next Thursday's debate, if raised (Lord Holme's unstarred question).

(SIGNED):

ANITA BHARUCHA  
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CT/TPU/2607 (APDL/52527)



Line to take

- any meetings or conversations which the Independent Chairman or their staff have with any individual or party are entirely a matter for their judgement and discretion and are not a matter for HMG;
- Senator Mitchell has said in the talks, when this was raised, that neither he, nor his colleagues, nor their staff have met Sinn Fein or the IRA since his present appointment;
- there is no reason for me or anyone else to reject this assurance, and I am happy to accept it.

[Security reports confirm what Dr Paisley alleges]

- Dr Paisley has not shown me any such security report. It is well known that in any case it is not our policy to comment on security reports;
- I repeat what I have said before: I accept the Independent Chairman's assurance given in the talks that there has been no contact since his present appointment.