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From The Ambassador  
Sir Paul Lever

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26 February 1998

John Holmes Esq CMG  
No 10 Downing Street

Dear John,

**ROISIN MCALISKEY: HANDLING OF DECISION**

I have just seen a copy of David Redhouse's letter to you of 20 February about the impending decision on Roisin McAliskey, together with Dominick Chilcott's letter of 25 February. David Redhouse asks for advice on the handling of German Ministers.

If the Home Secretary approves Ms McAliskey's extradition, there will no doubt be some criticism from the softer parts of the German public and media. But there will be no problems with the German Government, since it is their request to which we would be responding.

If the decision is not to extradite, then the reaction here will depend on the reasons given. The German Ministers concerned will, I would expect, understand if the Home Secretary decides on medical grounds to release Ms McAliskey. They will probably also understand, although somewhat less readily, if the decision is presented in a way which implies that wider considerations relating to the peace process was the reason. But they will, I think, need to be able to refer to some reason for the decision, if only to counter allegations that Ms McAliskey would not get a fair trial in Germany. I hope therefore that if the Home Secretary telephones Kanther to inform him of a decision in this sense they can agree a line which can be used in Germany in explanation. This might be followed up by a letter to Kanther which could be copied to Schmidt-Jortzig, the Minister of Justice.

Presumably if Ms McAliskey is extradited here we would need to be prepared, unless she claims Irish citizenship, to accept consular responsibility for her.

I am sending copies of this letter to David Redhouse (Home Office), Ken Lindsay (NIO), Dominick Chilcott (FCO), Christopher Meyer (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

Yours etc  
Paul  
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