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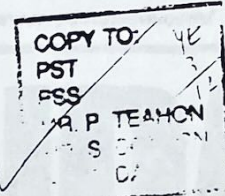
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TELEPHONE
(212) 319-2555
FAX
(212) 980-9475

Cop -
CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND
345 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10154-0037



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DATE: 2 December 1996

NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 3

TO: HQ, ANGLO IRISH

FROM: DERMOT BRANGAN

ATTENTION: SECRETARY O hUIGINN

Attached for your information is a copy of the tabloid **New York Post** lead article today which follows up on the **Sunday Mail** story about Martha Pope.

cc Ambassador, Washington

W. Nolan

*not passed on
to the Taoiseach*

hvc

3/12/96

U.S. negotiator Martin P. Suggs says that leader Gerry Adams is a criminal, a British newspaper has reported. U.S. officials claim it is a breach of neutrality.

**Report of tryst between U.S. envoy, top Irish
bel puts Ulster accord in jeopardy: Page 3**

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SEX SCANDAL PERILS IRA TRUCE



U.S. negotiator Martha Pope (right) had an affair with Sinn Fein leader Gerard Kelly (above in '70s file photo), a British paper reported yesterday. U.S. officials claim it's a smear campaign.



Report of tryst between U.S. envoy, top Irish
bel puts Ulster accord in jeopardy: Page 5

NEW YORK POST MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1996

TOP U.S. AIDE HAD AFFAIR WITH IRA BIG: TAB

By DEBORAH ORIN in London
THOMAS GALVIN in Washington
and JOHN O'MAHONY in N.Y.

A top U.S. peace negotiator in Ireland had a secret affair with a Sinn Féin leader, British news reports charged yesterday.

Sinn Féin's chief U.S. supporter immediately branded the allegation — which implicates the fragile Northern Ireland peace talks scheduled to resume Dec. 9 — part of a British smear campaign.

A London newspaper, The Mail on Sunday, reported that British intelligence has warned President Clinton and British Prime Minister John Major of a dangerous liaison between Martha Pope, a key player in the peace talks, and Gerard Kelly, a convicted Irish Republican Army bomber who is now a heavy negotiator.

Former Maine Sen. George Mitchell, the U.S. envoy to the peace talks, denied the charge.

"The allegation is absolutely and totally false. Miss Pope has never met Gerry Kelly," Mitchell said.

A British Embassy spokesman had no comment on King's charges.

Phoenix, author of "Phoenix: Potting the Shadows," a best-selling investigative book about secret police and MI5 operations in Northern Ireland, wonders about

MI5's methods in this case.

"MI5 mustn't have read the Mitchell report very carefully to be alleging that Pope was influenced by an IRA sympathizer," Holland said.

"The six principles" of the Mitchell report, which Pope helped produce, "demand a commitment to peaceful methods and majority consent and would be an epitaph for the IRA — they would cease to exist if they signed up to them."

These allegations are just the latest chapter in the history of raucous British-Irish peace negotiations — some secret, some not — that have yet to lead to a lasting peace treaty resolving the status of Northern Ireland.

Pope, a 51-year-old long-time Mitchell aide, and Kelly, jailed for his role in the 1973 bombing of London's Old Bailey, sneaked away for "weekend trysts" that were monitored by British intelligence, according to The Mail on Sunday.

It's not clear when the reported "trysts" took place. He's divorced and has a 24-year-old son; her marital status could not immediately

be learned.

Kelly, 42, is a dashing rogue who escaped from prison in 1983, was recaptured in 1986 and released in 1990 in a general amnesty. Up until a month ago, he was a member of the IRA Army Council but now claims to have no connection to the group.

Holland says Kelly is reported to have high status in the IRA.

Kelly is rumored to be one of the main IRA Army Council leaders, Holland said, who is close to Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams and whose support Adams needs to pursue peace.

Pope is nothing like him — like her boss Mitchell, she's viewed as cautious and circumspect. In 1991, she was named by Mitchell as Sergeant at Arms, making her the Senate's top female officer.

Neither Pope nor Kelly could be reached for comment.

The controversy couldn't come at a worse time for Mitchell — he was once a front-runner to be the next secretary of state, but his star seems to have faded and a

whiff of scandal won't help his cause.

It's also possible the allegations are what hurt Mitchell's chances. The MI5 report was reportedly filed three weeks ago, just when his name was floated as Warren Christopher's successor.

The White House yesterday was tight-lipped — "We don't comment on tall-told stories," said spokesman Barry Toiv, deploying the same tactic the White House used when Clinton strategist Dick Morris' steamy affair with hooker Sherry Rowlands came to light.

Toiv said he didn't know when the White House learned about the allegations of a romantic relationship between Pope and Kelly.

Britain is playing down the allegations — without confirming or denying whether an MI5 report exists.

"My understanding is Sen. Mitchell has assured us that there have been no contacts. We accept his assurances," a British Embassy spokesman said.

The future is likely to make an elusive peace deal even harder to achieve because the

British and Northern Irish Protestants are already suspicious that Mitchell and Pope are biased against them.

Hard-line Protestant Unionist leader Ian Paisley called for Pope's dismissal, saying, "People in Sen. Mitchell's office are not to be trusted, for they're friends of leading members of the IRA."

"This is typical MI5 [British intelligence] propaganda," Rep. Peter King (R-L.I.), fumed to The Post. "It's an act of desperation by the British to hide the fact they're responsible for a breakdown in peace talks."

King, Sinn Féin's biggest backer in Congress, accused MI5 of planting the story in order to hurt Pope, whom British authorities view as pro-Irish.

King said he found the timing of the MI5 report suspicious. "It's more than curious that within a matter of days, the Brits have rejected an IRA cease-fire offer from Sinn Féin ... and the person at the center of the Mitchell report, Martha Pope, is being smeared," he said.