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cc - Eo
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by fax

British Embassy
Washington

2 December 1996

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Dear John,

UUP IN THE US

1. I accompanied David Trimble, Sir James Molyneaux and Geoffrey Donaldson to State this morning, where they had an hour's meeting followed by lunch given by Peter Tarnoff. I passed your message to Trimble, who was grateful for your efforts to try to get through over the weekend.

2. I enclose a record. I had a short, separate discussion with Trimble about decommissioning. He confirmed that he could live with parallel decommissioning, à la Mitchell, and would not hold out for a tranche up front. But he - and Donaldson, whom I consulted separately - emphasised that decommissioning would need to start at an early stage during the negotiations.

3. I asked about moving on from procedure to substance, should Sinn Fein remain outside the talks process. Trimble said he was very keen to do this. The best way of regaining momentum would be to wrap up quickly the outstanding procedural business and then get on to substantive talks. HMG's latest proposals went in the right direction, but it was a pity that both Hume and the Irish Government were wholly distracted by trying to get Sinn Fein into the talks. If they would only co-operate, it would be possible to agree on a decommissioning package which would then be ready for use, off the shelf, in the event that Sinn Fein came on board later.

Yours ever,
Peter.

Peter Westmacott

cc: Ken Lindsay Esq, NIO(L)
Dominick Chilcott Esq, Private Office, FCO

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