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PRESIDENT CLINTON'S PHONE CALL WITH PM BLAIR, JANUARY 11, 2000

1. Dick Norland in the White House gave me the following read-out of President Clinton's phone call with PM Blair this afternoon.

2. The President was taken somewhat aback by the sense of alarm that Blair communicated, based on the fact that the British are hearing from Adams, and from the interlocutor with de Chastelain, that not only will decommissioning not happen by the February deadline but perhaps not even by the date indicated in the Good Friday Agreement. Even if this is a negotiating position, Blair expressed astonishment at the idea that the issue could be used in this way. For all the difficulty that decommissioning involved for republicans, there had to be some development that would enable General de Chastelain to report positively in the next weeks.

3. The President agreed to do all that he could. He went on to suggest to Blair that it might be helpful to the general atmosphere if the British side were able to achieve some visible signs of demilitarisation. A positive reaction to Patten would also, it seemed to him, have a beneficial effect. Blair sounded as if he were willing to consider some movement on these issues.

4. The President also told Blair that he would be presenting Adams with his view that decommisioning was not something that had to be achieved under the artificial deadline set by the UUC February meeting but that it was rather a fundamental requirement of the Good Friday Agreement. It needed to be shown that the Agreement was achieving implementation on this front as on others, and sooner rather than later.

5. The President agreed to speak with PM Blair again after his meeting with Adams (which is to take place at 2.30 pm to-morrow in the White House).

T Russell
January 11, 2000

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