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From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2012 9:16 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Andrew Mitchell resignation

From: Sullivan, Margie (AID/A) [mailto:msullivan@usaid.gov]
Sent: Monday, October 22, 2012 03:19 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Shah, Rajiv (AID/A)
Subject: Andrew Mitchell resignation

FYI

Below is the Guardian article on Mitchell's resignation. Below that is Andrew's resignation letter and PM Cameron's acceptance letter in response.

Speculation that the prime minister came under pressure from within his own cabinet to sack Andrew Mitchell over his outburst at police increased on Sunday when a senior minister refused to deny that she was among those who called for the chief whip to quit.

The home secretary, Theresa May, avoided two questions about her supposed involvement in the affair, which led to Mitchell resigning on Friday after four weeks during which David Cameron insisted that the chief whip had his full support. In reply to a third question on the subject, May told the BBC's Sunday Politics show: "I'm not going to talk about private conversations. Andrew has now resigned. I think that's an end of the issue."

In signs of a cabinet split, Cameron's embarrassment over the affair was further deepened by Michael Gove, the education secretary, who insisted that they had both been keen for Mitchell to stay on.

"David Cameron wanted to keep Andrew. I wanted Andrew to stay because I don't believe and the prime minister doesn't believe that 30 years of public service should be effaced at a stroke by seven seconds of unacceptable but very human exasperation," Gove told Sky's Murnaghan programme.

The latest interventions came after the Tory grandee Lord Tebbit led a wave of concern and anger from within the party about Downing Street's handling of the Mitchell affair. It began just days after his appointment as chief whip in the September reshuffle, when he apparently lost his temper with police at the gates to Downing Street, swore, called them "plebs" and told them to "know their place". Mitchell has

admitted swearing, but denied using the words "pleb" or "moron", as claimed by the police report.

Writing in the Observer, Tebbit said: "This dog of a coalition government has let itself be given a bad name and now anybody can beat it. It has let itself be called a government of unfeeling toffs ... The abiding sin of the government is not that some ministers are rich, but that it seems unable to manage its affairs competently."

MPs were privately dismayed that the affair, which many argued should have been ended with a prompt resignation four weeks ago, ended up dominating a week of good news for the government in which new figures showed crime, NHS waiting lists and unemployment had all fallen in recent months. The Conservatives had also had a welcome week of relatively good press after Cameron's speech to his party conference, which had lifted spirits after a summer of bad news.

In a sign of the depth of unease within the party, reports strongly suggested it was not just doubters among his cabinet colleagues but a lack of support among the 2010 intake of MPs – who make up nearly half the parliamentary party – that persuaded Mitchell to resign.

Nadine Dorries, who made her name labelling Cameron and the chancellor, George Osborne, as "arrogant posh boys", added to the pressure on Sunday, telling Murnaghan that after a week that included Mitchell's resignation and the prime minister's botched announcement of a new energy policy, the situation felt like the worst days of John Major's government which lost resoundingly to New Labour in the 1997 general election.

"It's not just one issue, it's a series of events which are beginning to do for us," she said. "Someone in No 10 needs to get a grip."

The Tory backbencher Andrew Percy, who was elected in 2010, said he had been "staggered" by Downing Street's handling of the Mitchell affair and accused Number 10 of failing to take on board the views of its more independently minded MPs.

"A lot of the problems we are facing at the moment are not problems about the economy but actually it's stuff we have made ourselves. The disasters or shambles that are created wholly within Westminster or within Downing Street," he told BBC Radio 4's The World This Weekend.

"This is a question to be asked about the whole Downing Street operation. I do feel that the Downing Street machine is too narrow. I don't feel we backbenchers are involved enough."

He said Downing Street would "have to respond" to the strength of feeling on the backbenches, warning: "There is only so much backbenchers will take."

Percy said that as soon as the Mitchell story broke last month he had told the whips he ought to be removed, warning it would "run and run and run".

"I was frankly a bit staggered at the time that Downing Street hadn't picked up on the whole mess earlier," he said.

Other MPs remain loyal to the leadership, including Nadhim Zahawi, who rebelled against plans to reform the House of Lords earlier this summer. He said the criticism of Downing Street came from those obsessed with "the Westminster village, 24-hour news, social media [and] breaking stories".

"I was an ex-pollster as you know. I ran YouGov, and most people, hard-working people who want to get on in life, will be looking at this government and thinking this government is on my side," he told Murnaghan. "Ordinary people who are working hard trying to get on in life don't obsess in the same way. They look at the big picture and the direction of travel is the right direction. This government is dealing with the big problems."

Dear David,

It is with enormous regret - not least because of the tremendous support and loyalty you have shown me during recent weeks - that I am writing to resign as your Chief Whip.

Over the last two days it has become clear to me that whatever the rights and wrongs of the matter I will not be able to fulfil my duties as we both would wish. Nor is it fair to continue to put my family and colleagues through this upsetting and damaging publicity.

I have made clear to you - and I give you my categorical assurance again - that I did not, never have, and never would call a police officer a "pleb" or a "moron" or used any of the other pejorative descriptions attributed to me.

The offending comment and the reason for my apology to the police was my parting remark "I thought you guys were supposed to f***ing help us".

It was obviously wrong of me to use such bad language and I am very sorry about it and grateful to the police officer for accepting my apology.

I am immensely grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Development Secretary for seven and a half years, both in Opposition and in Government.

I believe Britain, under your leadership, has made real progress in transforming the lives and the opportunities of some of the world's poorest people and that we will continue to do so as we deploy an expertise and commitment which show Britain at its best.

I now intend to concentrate on serving my constituents in the Royal town of Sutton Coldfield to the best of my ability and giving you the strong support you rightly deserve from all members of the Conservative Party.

With every good wish,

yours ever,

Andrew Mitchell.

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter. I was sorry to receive it, but I understand why you have reached the conclusion that you have, and why you have decided to resign from the Government.

I regret that this has become necessary, and am very grateful for all you have done, both in Government and in Opposition - as well as for the kind words in your letter.

I am in no doubt that your work in the field of international development has made a really important contribution - not only to the Conservative Party, but more importantly to Britain's standing in the world, and above all to international efforts to tackle deep and sustained poverty.

You brought real passion to the job in Opposition, which you turned into more than two years of very successful work in Government.

You brought immense energy and dedication to the role, a focus on the world's poorest, and decisive progress on the key issues of vaccination against preventable diseases, maternal health and family planning that make the greatest difference to the greatest number of people.

You have also brought a proper accountability and transparency to the Department for International Development's work.

Under your leadership of the Department, Britain achieved a leading global role, which will be continued as Britain chairs the United Nations High Level Panel.

As we discussed in advance of the reshuffle, I wanted you to bring your organisational skill and energy to the important job of Chief Whip. It was clear to me that you had already made a strong start.

As you have acknowledged, the incident in Downing Street was not acceptable and you were right to apologise for it.

You have much to be proud of from your service on the Frontbench both in Opposition and in Government, and in your continued service to your constituents in Sutton Coldfield. I hope that, in time, you will be able to make a further contribution to public life.

Yours
David

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2220306/Chief-Whip-Andrew-Mitchell-resigns.html#ixzz2A3SuvuNF>
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